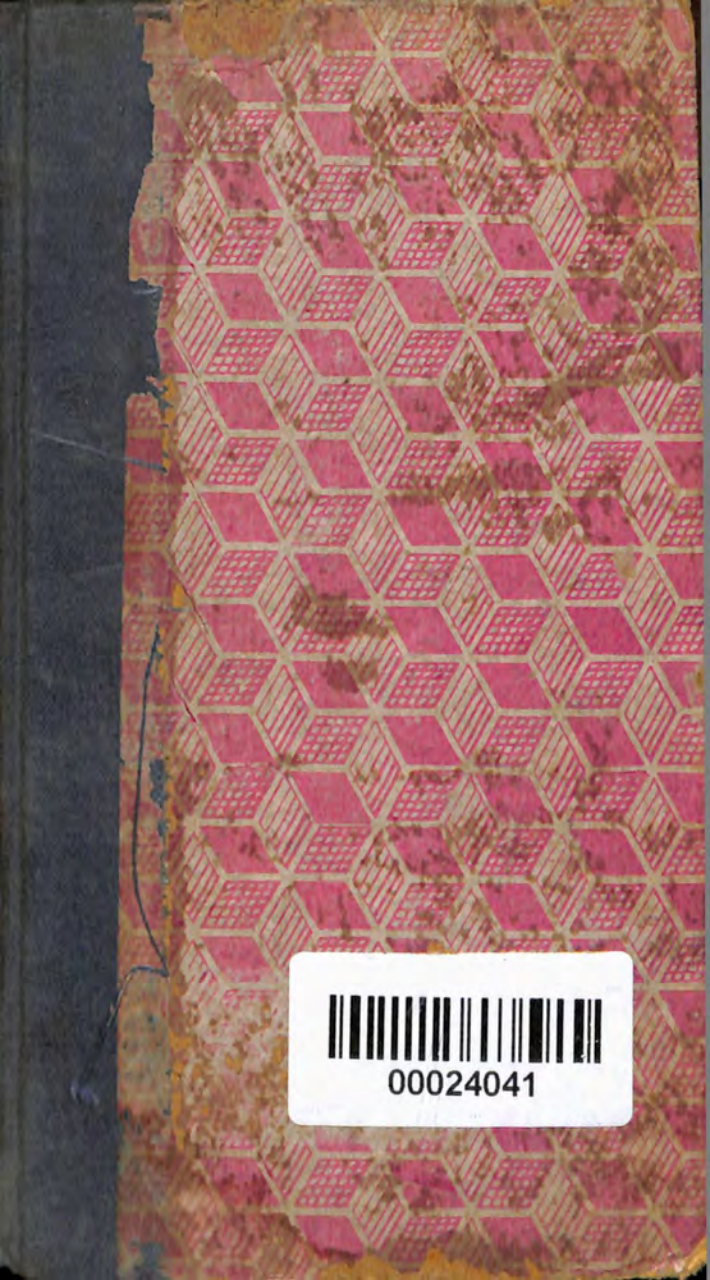
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MEMOIRS

OF

MARMONTEL.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

including

ANECDOTES OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHED LITERARY AND POLITICAL CHARACTERS WHO APPEARED IN FRANCE DURING THE LAST CENTURY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH;

WITH

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

By the

AUTHOR OF THE SWISS EMIGRANTS.

2404

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

Vol. I.

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PREFACE.

Few works have attracted a greater share of general attention than that, of which a translation is now offered to the public. The interesting nature of the narrative, the distinguished characters to which it relates, the exquisite skill and delicacy with which their portraits are drawn, combine to give it an interest superior to that inspired by almost any other work of the same kind. And there is, perhaps, no work which gives so intimate a view of literary and fashionable society, as they existed in a nation, by whom

its pleasures were valued and cultivated in a peculiar degree. But as French manners, particularly those of the literary and fashionable circles, in which our author spent most of his life, differ very much from those prevalent in this country, it may be proper to premise a short view of some of these peculiarities. The mere English reader may thus be enabled to understand some passages, which might otherwise have appeared to him unaccountable.

In no city, perhaps, was there ever such a confluence of immense fortunes, such a constant assemblage of all that was opulent and splendid, as at Paris. To it crowded all the considerable landed proprietors of a country, which, in point of extent and cultivation united, was not equalled by any other in Europe. Nor did men of fortune, as is usual in this country, resort to the metropolis only

to spend a few of the winter months there; they made it, in general, their constant residence the whole year round. The amusements pursued by its nobles were almost confined to those which the court and city afforded, to the constant pursuit of which they entirely devoted themselves. Nor were there many avocations of public business to divert them from this career. Hence proceeded an eager pursuit of every thing in the form of pleasure; hence an importance attached to whatever was connected with this object, greater than elsewhere, to business of the most serious concern. Conversation, with this view, was reduced to a science, a proficiency in which formed one of the grand roads to promotion. The drama, poetry of all kinds, philosophy even, were called in to vary the scene of amusement. More ignoble pleasures were also resorted to and pur-

sued with great excess; hence a licentiousness of manners, which exceeded, perhaps, that of any other European society. Of this there will appear too evident traces in the course of these Memoirs: nor does the author himself wholly escape the contagion. It does not appear, however, that his sense of right has ever been obliterated; in relating his errors, he fails not to acknowledge them as such, and seems to wish that they should serve as a warning to his readers.

In a society where pleasure was thus the reigning object, it was natural that the female sex should possess a high degree of influence. They occupied, in fact, a more prominent part in the theatre of life, than is usually assigned to them in this country. They were the arbiters, not of public amusements only, but of literature and the arts; of

celebrity, in short, of every kind. In consequence of this independence and consideration, they acquired, perhaps, even a more than ordinary share of those accomplishments, and those powers of pleasing, which are peculiar to their sex. There are other respects, however, in which, as is well known, their character was not improved by these circumstances. Perhaps this may have been somewhat exaggerated; but it is certain that from the dissolute character of the sovereign* and the higher orders, the most worthless of the sex became often the channel, through which court favour was distributed. The paying court to them was formed, as it were, into a trade, and considered as a regular mode by which a man might advance himself in the world; with which I am sorry to observe, that Marmontel him-

* Louis XV.

self does not appear to be altogether unacquainted.

Although married ladies enjoyed more freedom than in this country, before marriage they were kept under much greater restraint. In forming that connection, it was expected that they should be entirely at the disposal of their parents, or male relations. On this occasion, a portion *(dot)* was considered as indispensable.

In considering the society of men of letters, the first circumstance which strikes us, is the singular estimation in which that character was held in the Parisian circles. In the present, and other similar memoirs, we see them mixing familiarly with persons of the highest rank; with ministers and men in power. A late French writer has observed, that the leading philosophers of the day possessed a degree of consideration in so-

ciety, not inferior to that of the first nobility. The different academies, particularly that entitled the French academy, gave to this class of men not only a badge of distinction, but a sort of professional establishment, which it does not possess in any other country.

The French academy was founded in 1635, by Cardinal Richelieu, avowedly for the purpose of improving the French language. Its general object comprehended all subjects of grammar, poetry, and eloquence. The number of members was forty, who were elected by the academy; but the king's sanction was necessary to confirm their choice. They were understood to be all completely on a level. The first nobility solicited admission; but they received it only under the character of literary men. The academy had a chancellor and a director, who were chosen out of its own mem-

bers every three months; it had also a secretary, whose office was for life. It met thrice a week the whole year round, on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. The only public meetings were those which took place at the reception of a new member, who was expected to pronounce a speech on the occasion, called his *discours de reception*; and an annual meeting, at which the academy distributed prizes of eloquence and poetry, each consisting of a gold medal.

The Academy of Sciences was founded in 1666, by Colbert, under the auspices of Louis XIV. It embraced, originally, not only physics and mathematics, but also history and the fine arts. But the two latter branches were afterwards suppressed; it being represented that the first, as including church history, might lead it upon dangerous ground; and that the latter interfered with the business of

the French academy. This assembly consisted of upwards of an hundred members, and met twice a week, on Wednesday and Saturday. Previous to the French revolution it had published 108 volumes.

The Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Letters was founded also under the ministry of Colbert. Its original object was to commemorate the glory of France, and particularly that of Louis XIV, by historical medals, devices, and inscriptions. Colbert, during his lifetime, constantly attended its meetings, and often took the members out with him to his country house at Sceaux. This academy, however, did not gain any permanent establishment till 1610. Its number was then fixed at forty, and its meetings appointed to take place twice a week, on Tuesday and on Friday.

Before its extinction it had produced 43 volumes.

As amusement was the chief motive which prompted this gay and splendid society to become the patrons of literature, so those branches which had that for their object, were likely to experience the most ample share of patronage. The drama seems to have been the grand road to fame and fortune. Most writers who aimed at distinction in the path of polite literature, whatever their subsequent pursuits may have been, made their first appearance in the theatre. Next in attraction were what were called, *Vers de societé;* songs, epigrams, complimentary verses; any thing which was formed for amusing a company. The path of the French academy appears frequently to have been opened by excellence in this light department. Even philosophy

found it necessary to lay aside its austerity, and assume an easy and smiling aspect. The votaries of the abstract sciences too, studied, after the example of Fontenelle, to strip them of their thorns, and to render them engaging to fair and fashionable students.

It must not be concealed, however, that literature, in consequence of mixing thus intimately with the splendid and fashionable circles, was considerably tainted with the reigning licentiousness. Another circumstance, still more to be regretted, is the hostility which it exhibited towards the reigning system of religious belief. For this, indeed, some apology may be found in the circumstances of the time. A system which demanded the sacrifice of reason to authority, which prohibited all free discussion, and even, as will appear in these Memoirs, claimed still the right of

propagating its tenets by the sword, could hardly be compatible with a spirit of philosophical inquiry. It appears, from the writings of Fontenelle, that from the first dawn of this spirit, it was exposed to ecclesiastical persecution.—Mutual hostilities continued to widen the breach. Protestantism being little known or respected in France, attracted few of the deserters from the ruling faith; men, in wishing to throw off superstition, went generally into the opposite extreme of scepticism. The thinking world was thus invariably divided into two parties; the *philosophes* and the *dévots*. The former, during the period of our author's narrative, had gained a complete ascendency in the literary circles, and even in the academy. Voltaire, d'Alembert, Diderot, Helvetius, are the well known heads of this party; and to them Marmontel was attached, both by

literary habits and by private friendship. But, though it may be difficult to absolve him of a culpable degree of indifference upon the subject, yet it does not appear that his opinions were inimical to religion in general. On the contrary, they appear to have preserved a very just medium between the two extremes; and if he is found engaged in a contest with the reigning schools of theology, it is only on points on which the latter are evidently in the wrong.

It does not appear also, that our author had adopted the anti-monarchical principles which, from causes somewhat similar, were prevalent in the same circles. Without opposing the reforms, of which the government stood doubtless in need, he preserves his loyalty unimpeachable, and his political sentiments seem, on the whole, very just and moderate.

I reserve, till the conclusion, the few particulars which I have been able to learn respecting our author, in addition to those contained in his own narrative. I shall here only notice that circumstance in his character, which peculiarly fitted him for transmitting to us a lively picture of the manners of his age. This circumstance is, its flexibility. We do not see a mind, like that of Rousseau, living within itself, and communicating its own dark hue to the objects around it. His, on the contrary, resigns itself readily to the influence of every passion which circumstances inspire; like a mirror, it reflects, unchanged, all the various scenes through which he passes. This flexibility, indeed, bordering on weakness, is not in itself very laudable; but it gives a peculiar value to a work like the present,

where the external scenes and characters are so various and interesting.

Those leading characters in French literature, to which we have above alluded, will, it is presumed, be sufficiently familiar to the English reader. But, a few *notes* are added, with the view of throwing light upon such as may be less generally known; as well as upon other circumstances, which may be necessary for making the narrative completely understood.

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MEMOIRS

OF

MARMONTEL.

It is for the use of my children, and in compliance with the wishes of their mother, that I now write the history of my life. If any one else shall cast his eye over it, he must pardon details, that to him may appear tedious, but which will be interesting to those for whom they were intended. My children stand in need of receiving those lessons which a long life, and the variety of situations through which I have passed, have afforded to me. I wish them to learn from my story never to despair of their own powers, but never also to

be too confident; to dread the dangers which lurk under prosperity, and to bear with firmness the shocks of adversity.

I had one advantage over them; that of being born in a place where inequality of situation and fortune was scarcely felt. It was at Bort, a small village in Limosin. A little property, joined with some industry at home, or a small trade with the neighbouring districts, furnished the means of subsistence to almost all its inhabitants. Every one employed himself usefully, and was his own master. Mediocrity supplied the place of wealth. Thus the elevation, frankness, and dignity, of their character, were not debased by any kind of humiliation; and if any symptoms of foolish pride appeared, nowhere could it be worse received, or sooner corrected. During my childhood, therefore, though born in obscurity, I may be said to have known only my equals; thence arose, perhaps, a certain inflexibility which has adhered to my character, and which reason and age have never sufficiently softened down.

Bort, situated on the Dordogne, between Auvergne and Limosin, presents to the traveller, at first, a terrifying aspect. From afar, on the top of the mountain, he sees it at the bottom of a precipice, in danger of being overwhelmed by torrents, or crushed by a chain of volcanic rocks, some fixed like towers upon the height which commands the village; others half worn away at their base, and already hanging over. But Bort assumes a smiling aspect, when the eye, recovered, wanders over the valley. Above the village, a verdant isle, embraced by the river, and animated by the motion and sound of a mill, contains a grove peopled with birds. On the two banks of the river, orchards, meadows, and fields, cultivated by a laborious people, compose a varied picture. Beneath the village, the valley spreads, on one side, into a vast meadow, watered by clear springs; on the other, into fields crowned by a circuit of hills, which form an agreeable contrast to the wildness of

the opposite rocks. Farther on, this circuit is broken by a torrent from the mountains, which rolls and dashes amid forests, rocks, and precipices, till it falls into the Dordogne by a cataract, which, whether we consider the quantity of water, or the height of its fall, is one of the finest on the continent, and which to acquire celebrity, wants only more numerous spectators.

At a small distance from this cataract, lies that little farm of S^{t}. Thomas, where I used to read Virgil beneath the shade of the flowery trees that surrounded our bee hives, and where I made such delicious repasts of their honey. On the other side of the village, and on the declivity, above the mill, is that orchard where, on the fine festival days, my father took me to gather grapes from the vine which himself had planted, or cherries, plumbs, and apples, from the trees which he had grafted.

But that which, to me, forms the charm of my native abode, is the impression

which I retain of the first sentiments with which my soul was, as it were, imbued and penetrated, by the inexpressible tenderness with which my family regarded me. If there is any thing good in my character, it is owing, I believe, to these sweet emotions, to this habitual happiness of loving and being beloved. Ah! when heaven gives us good parents, how precious is the gift.

I was much indebted also to a certain pleasing gentleness of manners which prevailed then in my native place, and there must have been a peculiar attraction in the mild and simple life which it afforded, since nothing was more rare than to see Bort quitted by those who were born in it. The youth were educated in the neighbouring colleges, and the little colony distinguished itself; but they returned to their village, as a swarm of bees to the hive, after having collected the spoil.

I had learned to read in a little convent of nuns, who were good friends of my

mother. It was their practice to educate only girls; but they made an exception to this rule in my favour. A lady of a good family, and who had long lived retired in this convent, was so kind as to take me under her charge. I may well cherish her memory, and that of the nuns, for they loved me as their child.

From this school, I passed to that kept by a clergyman in the village, who, through mere inclination, and without any reward, had devoted himself to the education of children. This ecclesiastic, the son of a shoemaker, was the best man in the world. He was a true model of filial piety. I think I still see the look of complacency and mutual attention with which this old man and his son regarded each other, the one never forgetting the dignity of the priesthood, nor the other the sanctity of the paternal character. The Abbé Vaissiere, (for this was his name), after having fulfilled his ecclesiastical functions, divided the rest of his time between reading and the les-

sons he gave us. A short walk in fine weather, and sometimes, by way of exercise, a game at mall in the meadow, were his only amusements. He was serious, severe, and of a commanding appearance. His whole society consisted of two friends, men who were much respected in our village. They lived together in the most tranquil intimacy, meeting every day, and every day finding each other the same. The pleasure of their intercourse never experienced the least diminution, and, to complete their happiness, all the three died nearly about the same time. Seldom have I seen an instance of such a mild and steady equality continued through the whole course of life.

At this school I had a companion, who, from infancy, was an object of my emulation. His sedate and prudent air, his application to study, the care he took of his books, in which I never discovered a stain, his fair hair always well combed, his dress always neat though simple, and his linen always clean, afforded an ex-

ample that had a great influence on me. It is seldom that one child inspires another with an esteem such as I felt for him. He was called Durant. His father, a labourer in a neighbouring village, was acquainted with mine. I used to walk with the son, to see him in his village. How well were we received by this good grey-haired old man! How excellent was the cream, the milk, the brown bread he gave us! and what happy omens did he delight to draw, from the respect I shewed for his old age. Why cannot I go and strew flowers on his tomb! there surely he rests in peace; for in his lifetime he did nothing but good. Twenty years after, his son and I met at Paris, in very different walks of life; but I recognized the same correctness and propriety which had characterized him at school; and it gave me no small satisfaction to stand godfather to one of his children.

I now return to my early years. My progress in Latin was interrupted by a singular accident. I had a great desire

to learn, but nature had denied me the gift of memory. I had enough to retain the meaning of what I read, but the words left no trace in my brain, and the task of fixing them in it, was like that of writing on moving sand. I endeavoured, by the most intense application, to supply the weakness of my retentive powers; this labour was beyond the strength of my age; it affected my nerves. I became like a somnambulist; at night, when fast asleep, I sat up in bed, and, with eyes half open, repeated aloud the lessons I had learned. You see, said my father to my mother, he will certainly go mad, if you do not make him give up this wretched Latin. The study was suspended; but in eight or ten months I resumed it, and at the end of my eleventh year, my master, having judged me fit to enter into the fourth class, my father was prevailed upon, though with difficulty, to take me himself to the college of Mauriac, which was the nearest to Bort.

I must justify this reluctance of my

father, which was nothing more than became a prudent man. I was the eldest of a great number of children; my father, who, though a little rigid, yet under an air of roughness and severity, possessed the most sterling worth, loved his wife to distraction. He had every reason indeed to do so, for there could not be a woman more respectable, more interesting, more amiable in her whole conduct, than was my affectionate mother. I never could conceive how, with the simple education of our little convent at Bort, she had acquired a mind so elegantly cultivated, such elevation of soul, and particularly, such a correct, delicate, and refined sense of propriety in language and style, which seemed in her to be the pure instinct of taste. Our worthy bishop of Limoges, the virtuous Coetlosquet, often, when we met at Paris, spoke to me with the most tender interest of the letters which my mother had written, recommending me to his care.

My father felt for her as much vene-

ration as love. He reproached her only with an excessive fondness for me, but for this weakness there was an excuse. Of all her children she had nursed me alone; her precarious health never again allowed her to perform this pleasing duty. Her mother was no less fond of me; I think I still see the good little old woman; what a charming character! what sweet and smiling gaiety! As manager of the family, she presided over the household affairs, and set us all an example of filial piety; for she too had a mother, and the mother of her husband, of whom she took the greatest care. I go a little far back when I speak of my great grandmothers; but I remember well, seeing them still alive at the age of eighty, drinking a small glass of wine at the fire side, and reminding each other of old times, about which they told us wonderful stories.

The family contained also three sisters of my grand-mother, and the sister of my mother, the aunt who still survives;

amid these women, and a swarm of children, my father was the only man: a very small income supported them all. Order, good management, industry, a little trade, and above all, frugality, kept us in easy circumstances. The little garden produced vegetables almost sufficient for the supply of the house; the orchard supplied fruit, and our quinces, our apples, our pears, preserved with the honey of our bees, made, during winter, delicious breakfasts for the children, and for the good old women. The wool of a few sheep which pastured at S^{t}. Thomas, clothed sometimes the women, and sometimes the children; my aunts spun it; they spun also flax which grew on our field, and thus supplied us with linen. The evenings, in which, by the light of a lamp fed with the oil of our nut trees, the young people of the neighbourhood came to assist us in dressing this flax, might have furnished the subject of a charming picture. The crop of corn yielded by the little farm, secured our subsist-

ence; the bees produced wax and honey, which, under the careful management of one of my aunts, produced a revenue without much cost; the oil extracted from our nuts while yet fresh, had a relish, an odour, which we preferred to the taste and perfume of that of the olive. Our buck-wheat cakes, moistened, piping hot, with the good butter of Mont d'Or, made the nicest feast for us. I know not what food could have appeared to us better than our turnips and our chesnuts; and in winter evenings, when these fine chesnuts were roasting round the fire, or when we heard the water boiling in the pot where these sweet and savoury turnips were cooking, our hearts beat with delight. I remember also the perfume exhaled from a fine quince roasted under the ashes, and the pleasure our grandmother took in dividing it among us. That most temperate of women made us all gluttons. Thus, in a houshold where nothing was lost, such little articles when put together, kept up a sort of

plenty, and made a small expence sufficient for supplying our wants. There was so much decayed wood in the neighbouring forests, that it bore scarcely any value; my father was allowed to supply himself with fuel from it. Excellent mountain butter, and the most delicate cheeses were common and cheap; wine was not dear, and my father himself used it temperately.

Yet after all, the expence of the house came nearly up to our resources; and the foresight of my father overrated the probable expence of my education at college; besides, he looked upon the time spent in study as very ill employed; Latin, he said, only made people idle. Perhaps also he had some presentiment of the misfortune we were to suffer, in seeing him snatched from us by a premature death, and by making me early embrace an employment, whose profit was less distant and uncertain, he hoped to leave in me a second father to his children. Nevertheless, overcome by the importunities of

my mother, who was passionately desirous that at least her eldest son should study, he agreed to take me to the college of Mauriac.[a]

Overwhelmed then with caresses, bathed in sweet tears, and loaded with blessings, I set out with my father; he carried me behind him, and my heart beat with joy; but it beat with fear when my father said, 'They have promised, my son, that you shall be received into the fourth class; if you are not, I bring you back, and there will be an end of the matter.' Imagine the tremor with which I appeared before the master who was to decide my fate. Happily he was the good father Malosse, to whom I owe so much gratitude. His look, the sound of his voice, and the expression of his countenance, bore so natural and sensible a character of benevolence, that his first address announced a friend to the stranger who accosted him. Having received us in a manner the most gracefully courteous, he invited my father to return and learn the success

[a] See Note (1) at the end of the volume.

of the examination I was to undergo; and seeing me still very timid, he began by encouraging me; then by way of trial, he gave me a theme: it was full of difficulties, which I could not solve. I did it very ill, so that after reading it he said, 'My child, you are very far from being qualified to enter into this class; you will even find it difficult to be received into the fifth.' I burst into tears. 'I am undone,' said I; 'my father has no wish that I should continue my studies; he brings me here only out of complaisance to my mother; and he told me on the road, that if I was not received into the fourth class, he would carry me home with him: that would be a great loss to me, and a sad grief to my mother. Ah! for pity's sake receive me; I promise, father, to study so hard, that you will soon have cause to be satisfied. The master was so much affected by my tears, and by my good will, that he received me, and bade my father not be uneasy, for he was sure I would do well.

According to the custom of the college, I and five other scholars lodged with an honest tradesman in the city; and my father, a good deal grieved at setting out without me, left my bundle of clothes and provision for a week; this provision consisted in a large loaf of rye bread, a small cheese, a morsel of bacon, and two or three pounds of beef; my mother had added a dozen of apples. Such, indeed, was the weekly provision made by those scholars in our college who were best maintained. The landlady dressed our victuals, and for her trouble, her fire, her lamp, her beds, her lodging, and even the vegetables of her little garden, which she put into the pot, each of us gave her two shillings a month; so that reckoning every thing except clothes, I might cost my father four or five guineas per annum. It was much for him, and I longed greatly to save him this expence.

The day after my arrival, as I went to my class in the morning, I saw the mas-

ter at his window making me a sign with his finger to come to him. 'My child,' said he, 'you stand in need of private instruction, and of much study, to come up to your school-fellows: we must begin with the elements; come here every morning half an hour before the class meets, and repeat to me the rules you have learned; I will explain them to you, and point out their use.' On this day I wept again, but they were tears of gratitude. Thanking him for his kindness, I besought him to add to it by sparing me, for some time, the mortification of hearing my exercises read aloud in the class. He promised to do so, and I went to my studies.

I cannot express the tender interest with which he took upon himself the care of instructing me, or the agreeable manner in which he contrived to communicate his lessons. At the very name of my mother, whom I sometimes mentioned to him, he seemed to breathe her very soul; and when I delivered to him

the letters in which maternal affection expressed its gratitude, tears flowed from his eyes.

From the month of October, in which I began my studies, till the Easter holidays, I denied myself every kind of amusement and pastime; but having, at the end of this half year, become familiar with all my rules, able to apply them always correctly, and thus disentangled, as it were, from the thorns of syntax, I went on with more freedom. I was ever after one of the best scholars in the class; perhaps also I was the happiest; for my task was agreeable to me, and when I was pretty secure of doing it tolerably well, it became only a pleasure. I began to turn my attention to the selection and proper use of words, and even aimed at some degree of elegance in the construction of sentences. This employment, which cannot be carried on without analyzing our ideas, strengthened my memory. I perceived that a word fixed itself in my mind, in consequence of the

idea attached to it; and reflection soon shewed me, that the study of languages involved also the study of the art of discriminating the shades of thought, of separating it into its constituent parts, of forming it into a regular texture, and of marking with precision its character and relations. With every word, a new idea is introduced and unfolded in the youthful mind; so that the first classes form a course of elementary philosophy, much richer, more extensive, and more truly useful, than those are aware of, who complain that, in colleges, nothing is taught but Latin.

This exercise of the mind in the study of languages was pointed out to me by Father Bourges, an old man whom my master had recommended to me. Few men understood good Latin better than this old Jesuit. Having undertaken to continue and complete the poetical Latin dictionary which Father Vanniere had begun, he humbly petitioned to be at the same time allowed to teach the fifth class

of this little school in the mountains of Auvergne. He took a liking to me, and asked me to call upon him in the morning of holidays. I, as you may suppose, failed not to do so; and he was kind enough to spend sometimes whole hours in instructing me. Alas! the only return I could make was to attend him at mass; yet this he looked upon as a favour, and for the following reason.

This good old man was greatly troubled, because at prayers he could not, without the most painful exertion, keep his mind from wandering. While saying mass, especially, every word that he uttered was accompanied with a new effort to fix his thought; so that by the time he came to the words of the sacrifice, drops of sweat fell from his bald and prostrate forehead. I saw his whole body trembling with reverence and terror, as if he had seen the canopy of heaven open over the altar, and the living God descending. Never was faith more profound and animated; so that after the

performance of this sacred duty, he was reduced almost to a state of complete exhaustion.

He found relief from this fatigue in the pleasure of instructing me, and in that with which I received his lessons. He it was who laid open to me the rich and inexhaustible beauties of ancient literature, and who excited in me that thirst for it, which sixty years of study have not been able to satisfy. Thus I found myself, in this obscure school, placed under the tuition of one of the most learned men perhaps in the world; but I did not long enjoy this advantage; Father Bourges was translated, and six years after, I met him in a monastery at Toulouse, infirm, and almost wholly abandoned. This neglect of their old men was a most odious part of the institutions and customs of the Jesuits. However laborious a man was, however long he had been useful, the moment he ceased to be so, he was thrown away like refuse; a cruelty as senseless as it was inhuman,

among beings who were themselves growing old, and each of whom knew that he, in his turn, would experience a similar neglect.

The distinguishing character of our college, was a discipline which the scholars exercised over each other. Boys of different classes lodged in the same room, and the authority which was naturally acquired by those who were superior to the rest in age and talent, established order and regularity in their studies and behaviour. The child who, at a distance from his family, seemed, when out of the class, to be left wholly to himself, found among his companions superintendents and censors. They studied altogether round the same table; thus a circle of witnesses, placed under each other's eyes, mutually enforced silence and attention. The idle boy found it not at all amusing to sit fixed in motionless silence, and grew soon weary of his idleness. The dull boy, if diligent, was pitied, assisted, and encouraged; he was esteemed, if

not for his ability, yet for his good will; but no indulgence nor pity was shewn to the incurable sluggard; and when a whole room became infected with this vice, it fell into a kind of disgrace, and was despised by the whole college; parents were warned not to put their children into it. It was therefore greatly the interest of our landlords to have only studious boys in their house. I have seen them expelled solely on account of idleness and disorderly behaviour. Thus there was scarcely one of these groups in which idleness was tolerated; nor were amusement and play ever indulged in, till after study was over.

One custom; which I never saw established in any other college, redoubled, towards the end of the year, the ardour of our studies. Before rising from one class to another, we underwent a strict examination, and one of the tasks to be performed on this occasion was getting by heart a quantity of Latin. This, according to the class, consisted of poetry,

out of Phædrus, Ovid, Virgil, and Horace; or of prose from Cicero, Livy, Quintus Curtius, and Sallust; the whole forming a very considerable mass of study. We began long before the appointed time; and, not to encroach on our usual studies, we laboured at this task from day-break till the hour of our morning lesson. It was performed in the fields, through which, divided into groups, with books in our hands, we went humming like swarms of bees. Nothing is more difficult for a boy than to tear himself from his morning's sleep; but the most active of each band forcibly roused such as were lazily inclined. I have often, while yet almost asleep, felt myself dragged out of bed. To the exercise of my memory, in these tasks, I am indebted for any additional degree of pliancy and facility which I may have since experienced in the use of that faculty.

Our college discipline was no less distinguished by a spirit of order and eco-

nomy, than by studious habits. The youngest, and those newly come, were taught by the elder boys to take care of their clothes and linen, to keep their books clean, and to be saving of their provisions. All the bits of pork, beef, or mutton, that were put into the pot, were strung together like a chaplet of beads; and if any debate or difficulty arose in consequence of this mixture, the landlady decided it. When, on certain holidays, our friends sent us any delicacy, the treat was common, and those who received nothing partook equally with the rest. I recollect with pleasure the delicate attention with which the more fortunate of our number sought to conceal from the others this afflicting inequality. Our landlady informed us when any of these presents arrived; but she was forbid to name the boy for whom it was destined, who himself would have blushed to boast of his good fortune. My mother, on being told of this piece of discretion, greatly admired it.

Our play hours were spent in games after the ancient fashion; in winter we went upon the ice, in the midst of snow; while, in summer, regardless of the burning sun, we made long excursions into the fields. Our most frequent exercises were running, wrestling, boxing, quoits, throwing with the sling, and swimming. In hot weather, we went to bathe at more than a league's distance from the town; the little boys searched for cray-fish in the brooks; the elder fished for eels and trouts in the rivers, or caught quails in nets after harvest. These last were our highest pleasures; and when we returned from a long ramble, woe to the fields in which there were any green pease remaining. Not one of us would have been guilty of stealing a pin; but, in our system of morality, a maxim had been established, that nothing eatable could constitute a theft. I abstained as much as possible from this species of pillage; but though I did not actually steal the pease, I certainly was a party;

first, in furnishing my contingent of bacon to season them, and, lastly, in eating them along with the more active accomplices. To do like the rest appeared to me a duty, from which my situation forbade me to deviate; and I endeavoured to compromise the affair with my confessor, by giving my share of the booty in alms.

Meanwhile, I saw in a class above mine a scholar whose prudence and virtue continued unalterable; and I was sensible that his was the example which I ought to follow; but while I viewed him with emulation, I did not dare to consider myself as having a title to become equally distinguished. Amalvy had so many claims to respect at college, and was there so completely without an equal, that the sort of distance which was left between us seemed just and natural. In this extraordinary young man all the endowments of the mind and heart seemed to have united, in order to render him completely accomplished. Nature had

given that external appearance which one would think should always be bestowed on merit alone. He was tall, his figure was noble and elegant, his deportment sedate, his air serious, but serene. I saw him always come to college attended by some of his class-fellows, who were proud of being in his company. He associated with them, but without becoming familiar, and he never divested himself of that dignity which arose from the habit of holding the first place among his equals. The cross,* the ensign of this superiority, was never taken from his button-hole; no one dared attempt carrying it off. I admired, I took pleasure in seeing him, and yet every time that I saw him, I went away dissatisfied with myself. Not but that, by dint of hard labour, from the time of entering the third class, I had distinguished myself sufficiently; but I had two or three rivals; Amalvy had none. My composi-

* Worn by those who were at the head of each class.

tions did not meet with that uniform success which astonished us in his; still less had I that ready and correct memory with which Amalvy was endowed. My only comfort was, he was older than I; and I hoped to equal him by the time I arrived at his age. After analysing as minutely as possible what then passed in my mind, I can truly say, that into this feeling of emulation the malignant sentiment of envy never insinuated itself. I grieved not that the world should contain one Amalvy; my prayer to heaven would have been, that there should be two, and that I should be the second.

This college had an advantage still more precious than emulation; a religious spirit was carefully maintained in it. We were obliged to go every month to confession; and this practice formed a most salutary preservative of the youthful character. The shame which attended this humble acknowledgment of our most secret faults, saved us perhaps from the commission of a greater number than the most sacred motives.

Thus at Mauriac, from between the age of eleven and twelve, I went on with my Latin; and in rhetoric, which I also studied, I kept almost constantly at the head of the class. My worthy mother was transported by the intelligence. When my dimity waistcoats were returned, the first thing she did was to see if the silver chain, by which the cross hung, had darkened my button-hole; and when she discovered this mark of my triumph, all the mothers in the neighbourhood were informed of her joy; our worthy nuns returned thanks to heaven; the countenance of my dear Abbé Vaissiere shone with glory. This happiness, which I made my mother enjoy, forms still the most pleasing of my recollections; but while I informed her with pleasure of my success, I was careful to conceal some unpleasant occurrences, which, if the least complaint had escaped me, would have sensibly afflicted her. These were, my quarrel in the third class with Father Bis, head master of the school, about the Auvergne dance; and the

danger which I incurred of being whipt, in the second Latin class, and also in the rhetoric; once for having dictated to another böy a good theme, and, another time, for having gone to see the workmanship of a clock. Luckily I extricated myself from all these perils, not only without accident, but even with some degree of honour.

Every one knows the malignity with which favourites are regarded at the court of kings; it is the same at school. The particular attention which my master in the fourth class had paid me, and my assiduity in going to him every morning, had made me be viewed with a jealous and suspicious eye. From that time, therefore, I made a point of proving myself a better, and more faithful, comrade, than any of those who accused and distrusted me. When I came to be frequently at the head of my class, a situation to which the unpleasant office of censor was attached, I resolved to exercise it more mildly than usual. During the half hour, when the master went

away, and left me to preside, I began with allowing my companions a moderate degree of liberty; they talked, they laughed, they amused themselves without much noise, and my note said nothing. This indulgence, making me beloved, grew more liberal every day. To liberty succeeded licentiousness, and I suffered it. I did more: such delight did I take in public favour, that I encouraged it. Having heard that, at Rome, public shews were given by men in power, who wished to gain over the multitude, I took it into my head to imitate this example. I was told, that one of our companions, named Toury, performed the dance of Auvergne, more vigorously than any other in these mountains; I allowed him to dance it; and, in doing so he did certainly leap to a wonderful height. When they had once enjoyed the pleasure of seeing him bounding in the middle of the room, nothing else would satisfy them; while I, becoming always more complaisant, again called out for the dance. Now, you must know, that the shoes of

the dancer had iron soles, and that the class-room was paved with a kind of stone that resounded like brass. The master, in going his rounds, heard this prodigious noise; he rushed in. Instantly the uproar ceased, every one was in his place; Toury himself, with eyes fixed on his book, sat in his corner, quite torpid and motionless. The master came to me, boiling with rage, and asked my note: it was blank. Conceive his irritation; finding no one to punish, he treated me as the guilty person, and imposed a most severe task. I endured it without complaining. But though quiet and patient in whatever related only to myself, I was rebellious and determined as to not giving any disturbance to my school-fellows. My courage was supported by the honour of hearing myself called the martyr, and sometimes even the hero of the class. In the second class, indeed, the liberty was less noisy, and the resentment of the master seemed to be softened; but, amid

this tranquillity, a new storm suddenly arose.

My master, in the second class, was no longer Father Malosse, who had loved me so much; it was now taught by one Father Cibier, as dry and sour as the other was mild and agreeable. Neither his capacity, nor, I believe, his learning, was great, yet he taught his class very well. He had a singular art of rousing emulation, by exciting jealousy. If, at any time, a bad scholar had done not quite so ill as usual, he extolled him with such warmth, as to put the best in dread of a new rival. In this spirit, reading over one day a certain theme, which a middling scholar was supposed to have written, he defied any of us to equal it. Now, it was known in the class, who it was that had written this theme, which he was praising so loudly. It was kept a secret; for there was a severe prohibition against any one doing the duty of another. But their impatience, at hearing a borrowed merit so excessively praised, could

not be restrained. 'Father,' cried some one, 'this theme, which you extol so much, was not written by him.'—'By whom then?' said he in a passion. They were all silent. 'It is you that must tell me,' said he, addressing himself to the scholar, who had presented the theme; and he, weeping, named me. I was under a necessity of acknowledging my fault; but I besought the master to hear me. He listened. 'It was,' said I, 'on the day of the festival of S^t. Peter, that Durif, our school-fellow, was giving us a dinner. Being wholly taken up with preparing the entertainment for his friends, he could not complete the preparation for his class, and the theme gave him particular uneasiness. I thought it lawful and just to save him that trouble, and offered to labour for him, while he was labouring for us.'

There were, at least, two in fault; the master chose to see only one, and his wrath fell upon me. Bewildered, stupified with rage, he sent for the corrector to punish me, as he said I had deserved;

at the mention of the corrector, I packed up my books, and was going to leave college. My studies seemed at an end; my prospects in life were about to change. But that natural sentiment of justice, which, at an early age, is so quickly and strongly felt, forbade my school-fellows to abandon me. No, cried the whole class, this punishment would be unjust; and if he is obliged to go, we will all go along with him. The regent was pacified, and forgave me, sheltering himself under the authority of the dictator Papirius.

The whole school approved this clemency, except the head master, who maintained, that it was an act of weakness; and that rebellion should never be yielded to. He himself, a year after, wished to practise upon me the rigour he so highly approved of; but he found, that there was at least a necessity for being just, before being rigorous.

We had only a month longer to spend in the rhetoric class, before being emancipated from him, when he found me in a

list of scholars, whom he had resolved to punish for a most improbable fault, of which I was wholly innocent. In the steeple of the Benedictines, a few steps from the school, the clock was repairing. A number of scholars, of different classes, curious to see the mechanism, had ascended this steeple. Whether from the awkwardness of the workman, or from some unknown accident, the clock did not go; it was as difficult to suppose that thick iron wheels had been disordered by children, as that they had been eaten by mice. But the clock-maker accused them, and the master listened to his complaint. Next day, at the meeting of the afternoon class, he sent for me. I went to his apartment, and found ten or twelve scholars drawn up in a line round the wall. In the middle stood the corrector, who, at the orders of this terrible master, was flogging them one after the other. On seeing me, he asked if I was one of those who had gone up to the clock? And on my answering that I was, he pointed out

with his finger my place in the circle; and then went on with his flogging. Snatching a moment, when he was holding one of his victims, who struggled under him, I at once opened the door, and fled. He darted out to seize me, but missed his prey, and I got off with only a piece of my coat torn.

I took refuge in the class-room, where the master had not yet arrived. My torn clothes, my distress, the fear, or rather the indignation, of which I was full, served, instead of a preface, to draw their attention. 'My friends,' cried I, 'save me, save yourselves, from the hands of a madman, who pursues us. It is your own honour, as well as mine, that I call upon you to defend. This violent and unjust man, this Father Bis, was on the point of committing upon you, in my person, the basest injury, by disgracefully whipping a rhetorician. He deigned not even to name the cause of this punishment; but the cries of the children, whom he was flaying alive, gave me to

understand, that it was about disordering a clock; an absurd accusation, which he must have seen to be false: but he delights in punishing, and in seeing us shed torrents of tears: innocent or guilty, all is alike to him, provided he finds vent for his tyranny. My crime, my inexpiable crime, which he can never forgive, consists in not having chosen to betray you for his gratification, and in having rather endured his rigour, than exposed my friends to it. You have seen how obstinately, for three years, he has sought to make me the spy and the informer of my class. You would be astonished at the enormous labour with which he has overwhelmed me, in hopes of forcing out notes, which would afford him every day the pleasure of molesting you. My firmness got the better of his, his hatred seemed to fall asleep; but he watched for the moment of punishing me, of punishing you, for the fidelity which I have observed. Yes, my friends, had I been timid or weak enough, to allow him to lay hands

on me, rhetoric was dishonoured, and dishonoured for ever. This was his object. He wished it to be said, that in his time, and under his rod, rhetoric had been humbled. Thank Heaven, we are saved. He will doubtless be here presently, demanding that you should give me up; and I already feel secure as to the tone of your answer. But though my comrades should be base enough not to defend me, I alone would sell dear my honour and my life, and would die free, rather than live in disgrace. But far be this thought from me; I see you all as determined as I am, to continue no longer under such a yoke. In a month, our rhetoric would, at all events, have ended, and our vacation commenced. Now, we need not regret cutting off a month from the course of our studies. Let this, then, be the breaking up of our class. From this moment we are free; and the haughty, the cruel, the ferocious, man is confounded.'

My harangue had roused emotions of high indignation; the conclusion, in particular, had a most powerful effect. Never peroration carried the number of its hearers so rapidly along with it. Yes! let us break up; vacation! was carried with acclamation, by a great majority. And, 'Let us all,' said they, 'before leaving the class-room, swear, upon this altar, (for there was one), that we will never more set foot within it.'

After the oath had been pronounced, I resumed:—'My friends, we ought not to quit this class-room like libertines, or runaway slaves; let not the master say that we ran off: our retreat must be made in a quiet and orderly manner: and, with the view of rendering it more honourable, I propose to distinguish it by a religious act. This room is a chapel; let us render thanks to God, by a solemn *Te Deum*, for having obtained and preserved, during the course of our studies, the affection of our school-fellows, and the esteem of our masters.'

'Instantly I saw them all drawn up round the altar, and, amid deep silence, one of our companions, Valarché, whose voice rivalled that of the bulls in his native district of Cantal, thundered the hymn of praise: fifty voices replied, and it is easy to conceive the astonishment of the school at the noise occasioned by this extraordinary and sudden concert. Our master came up first, the head-master came down, the principal himself stalked gravely to the door of the class-room. The door was shut, nor did we open it till the *Te Deum* was sung; then forming ourselves into a half circle, the little boys close to the great ones we allowed them to approach. 'What sort of uproar is this,' cried the enraged head-master, stalking into the middle of us. 'Father,' said I, 'what you call an uproar is only the act of returning thanks to heaven for having allowed us to complete our early studies without falling into your hands.' He threatened to inform our families of this criminal revolt; and viewing me with

a threatening and terrible aspect, he foré told that I would one day be the leader of a faction. He was ill acquainted with my character; and accordingly his prediction has never been verified. The principal wished, by a milder method, to recal us to our duty; but we entreated him not to insist on our breaking a resolution consecrated by an oath. Thus our good master alone remained with us; I say good; this praise is due to him; for though of a cast of mind less flexible and mild than Father Malosse, he might at least vie with him in goodness of heart. According to the idea which has been formed respecting the political character of a society, so rashly condemned, and suppressed with so much severity, never man was less a Jesuit in his heart than Father Balme; (such was the name of this regent). His character was steady and frank; he observed in his class an impartiality, an uprightness, an inflexible justice, and expressed towards his scholars a dignified and tender esteem, which

gained at once our respect and affection.

His natural sincerity sometimes allowed us to see, through the austere decorum of his order, symptoms of energy and pride, which were more allied to the courage of a soldier than to the character of a monk. I remember one day, when a rude and unpolished fellow in our class had given him an impertinent answer, he darted suddenly from his seat, and violently tearing an oak plank from the floor of the class-room—'Wretch!' said he, holding it over his head, 'I will not whip a rhetorician, but I knock down whoever dares to violate the respect due to me.' We were infinitely delighted with this kind of correction: we liked even the terror that had struck us at the sound of the broken plank, and saw with pleasure the insolent fellow falling on his knees before this kind of club, and humbly asking forgiveness.

This was the man to whom I was now to give an account of what had passed. I

marked him as I went on; and when I informed him that one of his scholars had been on the point of undergoing the lash, I saw his countenance and his eyes inflamed with indignation; but after the first emotion was over, he said, endeavouring to cover his wrath under a smile, 'Why did you not cry out, *sum civis Romanus?*' 'I took good care of that,' replied I; 'I had to do with a Verres.'

However, that he might not be exposed to any reproach, Father Balme made every effort to retain us that his duty required; he employed arguments and entreaties of every kind. His efforts were fruitless; but this did not lower us in his esteem, and it increased his affection for me. 'My good fellow,' whispered he, 'to whatever school you go, you may find my certificate of some advantage; this is not the time to offer it; but come in a month hence, and I shall give it you sincerely and heartily.' Thus closed my rhetoric.

I had thus a pretty long vacation this

year, but very luckily I found in my native town an old country curate, a distant relation, and a man of learning, who initiated me in the logic of Port Royal, and took also the trouble of accustoming me to speak Latin. In our walks, he would converse with me only in that language, which he himself spoke with facility; I found inestimable advantage from this habit when I came to attend philosophical lectures, which were given in Latin, and where otherwise I should have felt as if transported into a strange country. But before passing on to that period, I must take a short retrospective glance over the years that have already elapsed; I must talk of those annual vacations during which I went home, where my labours and troubles were rewarded by so pleasing a repose.

My little christmas vacations were spent by my relations and myself in the enjoyment of our mutual tenderness, without any other diversion than the visits which friendship or propriety called

for. As the weather was severe, the pleasure I felt most sensibly was that of finding myself comfortably seated by a good fire; for at Mauriac, during the bitterest cold, when every thing was frozen, and when in going to school, we were forced to make a way for ourselves through the snow, on returning home, we found only a few half-burnt billets hissing under the pot, and were scarcely allowed, one after another, to thaw our fingers. Most commonly, indeed, the chimney being besieged by the landlord and his family, it was a favour if we ever came near it; and during our evening studies, when our fingers, benumbed with cold, could no longer hold the pen, the flame of the lamp was the only heat with which we could relieve them. Some of my companions, born upon the mountain, and hardened to the cold, endured it better than I, and accused me of effeminacy. In a chamber where the blast blew in upon us through the broken panes, they thought it ridiculous that I should

be chilled, and amused themselves with my shiverings. I was ashamed of being so weak and so sensible of cold, and went with them upon the ice in the middle of snow, in order, if possible, to inure myself to the severity of winter; but though I thus subdued nature, I did not change it; I only learned to suffer. When I got home, therefore, the finding myself warm and comfortable, in a good bed, or by a good fire side, made one of the most delicious moments of my life; an enjoyment with which continued indulgence could never have made me acquainted.

In these Christmas vacations, my worthy grandmother, with a look of deep mystery, disclosed to me the secrets of her houshold. She shewed me her winter stores, as she would have done so many treasures; her bacon, her hams, her sausages, her pots of honey, her jars of oil, her piles of buck-wheat, of barley, of peas and beans, her heaps of turnips and chesnuts, her beds of straw covered with fruits. 'See, my child,' said she, 'these

are the bounties bestowed on us by Providence; how many worthy families have not received so much! and what thanks ought we to return for these favours.'

Nothing could be more sober than this prudent housewife in whatever regarded herself; but it was her delight to see plenty reigning in the house. One treat, which she took the greatest pleasure in giving us, was the Christmas supper. As it took place every year, the family fully expected it, but, at the same time, studiously avoided shewing this expectation: for every year she flattered herself that the surprise would be new, and of this pleasure they took care not to deprive her. While they were at mass, the green-cabbage soup, the pudding, the sausage, the bright red piece of salt pork, the cakes, the apple fritters, were all with mysterous secrecy dressed by her and one of her sisters; I, who alone was privy to all these preparations, said not a word. After mass, the family

arrived; and when, on finding this excellent repast on the table, they raised a cry of admiration at the magnificence of their worthy grandmother; this exclamation of surprise and joy was the fulfilment of her utmost wishes. On twelfth day, the bean afforded a new subject of rejoicing; and, when the new year came, the whole family embraced each other with such warmth, and exchanged such tender wishes for each other's welfare, that no one, I think, could have witnessed it without emotion. Conceive the father of a family, surrounded by a crowd of women and children; they raising their eyes and their hands to heaven, and calling down blessings on his head; while he answered their prayers by tears of love, ominous perhaps of our impending misfortune. Such scenes did this vacation present.

That of Easter was somewhat longer, so as, in fine weather, to allow me some time for amusement. I mentioned that,

in my native village, great care was taken of the education of the boys; their example afforded to the girls an object of emulation. The instruction of the one improved the character of the other, and gave to their air, their language, their manners, a certain politeness and propriety, with something peculiarly engaging, which I can never forget. An innocent freedom prevailed in this youthful society. The girls and boys walked together, even in the evening by moonlight. Their common amusement was singing; and their young voices united, made, I think, a pleasing harmony. I was very early admitted into this society; but till the age of fifteen, it did not at all encroach on my love of study and solitude. I never was happier than in the bee-garden of S^{t}. Thomas, when I spent a fine day in reading Virgil's verses on the industry and regulation of these laborious republics, which I saw prospering under the care of one of my grand-aunts. She

had observed their labours and their manners better than Virgil; she described them also better, made me view, with my own eyes, their wonderful instincts, and delighted me by pointing out marks of intelligence and wisdom, which had passed unobserved by that divine poet. In this love of my aunt for her bees, as in love of every kind, there was perhaps a certain illusion, and the interest she took in their young swarms, bore a great resemblance to that of a mother for her children; but indeed it seemed to be fully returned. I even thought I saw them delight in flying around her, in knowing her, in listening to, and obeying her voice; for their beneficent mistress they had no sting; and when during a storm, she gathered, wiped, and warmed them with her breath and in her hands, it almost appeared that, on returning to life, they sweetly hummed their gratitude. There was no fear in the hive when their friend visited them; and if, on seeing any of them less active than usual, sick, or weak through fatigue

or old age, her hand poured into the bottom of the hive a little wine to recruit their health and vigour, the same sweet murmur seemed to express their thanks. She had surrounded their little territory with fruit trees, such as flourish in early spring; she had introduced a little stream of clear water, which flowed over a bed of pebbles; on its banks, thyme, lavender, marjoram, all the plants whose flowers were most pleasant to them, offered them the first fruits of the fine season. But when the mountain began to bloom, and its aromatic herbs diffused their odours, our bees deigned no longer to amuse themselves with the spoil of their little orchard, but sought at a distance more copious riches; and when we saw them return loaded with stamina of various colours, purple, azure, and gold, my aunt told me the name of the flowers from which these had been stript.

All that passed before my eyes, that my aunt related, and that I read in Virgil, attached me so strongly to this little

nation, that while employed in observing their operations, I forgot myself, and could not withdraw without a sensible reluctance. Since that time, even till now, I have had such an affection for bees that I cannot without affliction think on the cruel practice, which prevails in certain countries, of killing them in order to collect their honey. With us, when the hive was full, it was a relief to take away what was superfluous; but we left them what was abundantly sufficient for their support till the new blossoms appeared. We had art enough, without wounding any, to carry off such part of the comb as exceeded their wants.

During the long vacations, at the end of the year, having fulfilled all my duties, and gratified all my inclinations, I could spend some time in company; and I must confess, that, every year, I took increased pleasure in that of the fair sex; but it was only, as I mentioned before, at the age of fifteen, that I felt all its charms. The attachments, which were formed

among the young people, gave no uneasiness to their families: there was so little inequality of rank and fortune, that the parents gave their consent almost as readily as the children. But that which was attended with no danger to my companions, might have the effect of extinguishing my emulation, and of rendering the fruit of my studies abortive.

I saw hearts selecting each other, and mutual ties forming between them. I felt a wish to follow the example. One of our young female companions, and the handsomest as I thought, appeared to me to have still no fixed attachment, and to feel, like me, only a vague desire of pleasing. With all her freshness, she had not that soft and tender brilliancy with which beauty is represented, when we compare it to the rose; but the vermilion, the down, the roundness, of the peach, form an image that sufficiently resembles her. So handsome a mouth could not, surely be devoid of wit. Her eyes and her smile were alone sufficient to embellish the

simplest language; and good day, good evening, from her lips, appeared to me delicately pleasing. She might be a year or two older, and this inequality of age, joined to an air of prudence and judgment, rendered my rising love somewhat timid; but after endeavouring, for some time, to render my attentions agreeable, I gradually perceived that she was affected by them; and, as soon as it appeared possible that my passion could be returned, I became seriously in love. I owned it without reserve, and she too without reserve answered, that her inclination was in unison with mine. 'But you know well,' said she, 'that, to be lovers, we must at least hope one day to be married; and, at our age, how can we hope it? You are scarce fifteen; you are just going to your studies?' 'Yes,' said I, 'such is my own resolution, and my mother's wish.' 'Well, then,' said she, 'you must be absent five years before entering into any profession, and I shall be above twenty before we can know what you are in-

tended for.' 'Alas,' said I, 'it is too true, I cannot know what is to become of me; but swear to me, at least, that you will never marry without consulting with my mother, and asking her whether I myself cannot offer you some hope.' She promised, with a charming smile, to do so; and, during the rest of the vacation, we gave ourselves up to the pleasure of loving each other, with all the frankness and innocence of our age. The walks we took by ourselves, our most interesting conversations, were spent in fancying for me future possibilities of success and fortune, that might be friendly to our wishes. But these pleasing illusions, following like dreams, in succession, destroyed each other. After pleasing ourselves for a moment, we ended with weeping over them, just as children weep, after having built a castle of cards which a breath has overthrown.

As we sat one day on the meadows, by the river's side, engaged in one of these conversations, an event happened, that

nearly cost me my life. My mother knew the particular attention I paid to Mademoiselle B * *. She was uneasy at it, and dreaded lest love should cool my inclination and ardour for study. Her aunts perceived her uneasiness, and pressed her so much, that she could no longer dissemble the cause. From that time, these honest women vied with each other, in bitterness against this innocent young creature, accusing her of coquetry. One day that my mother was inquiring for me, one of them set off to seek me in the meadow; and having found me *tête-a-tête* with the object of their resentment, she poured the most unjust reproaches on that amiable girl, not omitting the words indecency and seduction. After this imprudent violence, she went away and left us. I was furious, and my mistress in despair, stifled with sighs, and tears flowing from her eyes. Conceive the impression which her grief made upon my soul. It was in vain that I asked forgiveness, wept at her knees, besought

her to despise, to forget, this injustice. 'Wretch that I am,' cried she, 'I am accused of seducing, and of wishing to lead you astray! Fly from me! never see me more! No, I will never see you again.' At these words she departed, and forbade me to follow her.

I returned home with a distracted air; my eyes on fire, my head quite turned. Happily my father was absent, and my mother was the only witness of my ravings. Seeing me pass by, and go up to my room, she was terrified at my agitation. She followed me. I had locked myself in. She commanded me to open the door. 'Oh! my mother,' cried I, 'in what a condition do you see me. I am in despair; I cannot command my feelings; I scarcely know myself. Spare me the shame of appearing before you in this condition.' My whole forehead was covered with wounds which I had given it, by striking my head against the wall. What a passion is anger! I experienced, for the first time, its excess and fury. My mother,

distracted, pressing me in her arms, and bathing me with tears, raised such doleful cries, that all the women in the house, except one, hastened thither; and that one, who had confessed her fault, but did not dare to appear, was tearing her hair at the disaster she had occasioned.

Their lamentations, the deluge of tears which I saw flowing around me, the tender and timid sighs which I heard, softened my heart, and made my anger subside; but I was nearly suffocated, the blood had swelled all my veins; there was a necessity for bleeding me. My mother was alarmed for my life. My grandmother, while the operation was performing, whispered to her what had passed; for in vain had she inquired of me: *horror! barbarity!* were the only words I could utter in reply: it would have been at that moment dreadful to say more. But when the bleeding had given me some relief, and when a little tranquillity had turned my rage into grief, I gave my mother a simple and faithful ac-

count of my passion; of the honourable and proper manner in which Mademoiselle B** had returned it; and, finally, of the promise she had kindly given me, never to marry without my mother's consent. 'After this,' said I, 'how must the unjust and bitter reproaches, which she has endured on my account, have wounded her heart? how must they have rent mine? Ah! my mother, nothing can wipe off the disgrace.' 'Alas!' said she, weeping, 'it is I that have caused it. My uneasiness about this connection has troubled your aunts' brain; if you do not pardon them, you must refuse also to pardon your mother.' At these words, I threw my arms around her, and strained her to my heart.

In obedience to her command, I had lain down. The agitation of my blood, though somewhat abated, was by no means stilled. All my nerves were shaken, and the image of this interesting and unfortunate girl, whom I believed inconsolable, was present to my thought, in

features expressive of the keenest and most piercing anguish. My mother saw that this idea had got possession of me; and my heart, still more troubled than my brain, kept my blood and spirits in a state of irregular action, that resembled a burning fever. The physician, not knowing the cause, foreboded a serious illness, and talked of preventing it by a second bleeding. 'Do you think,' asked my mother, 'that it may be delayed till the evening?' He answered that it might. 'Then, sir, return this evening, till then I will take care of him.'

My mother, advising me to attempt taking some rest, left me alone, and, a quarter of an hour after, she returned accompanied—By whom? You, who know nature, must foresee it. 'Save my son; restore him to my arms,' said she, leading to the bedside my youthful mistress. 'This dear boy thinks you are offended; tell him that you are so no longer, that your forgiveness has been asked, and that you have granted it.' 'Yes,' said this charming girl, 'I

have now only thanks to render to your excellent mother; and there can be no offence so great, which the kindness with which she loads me would not banish from my recollection.'—'Ah! Mademoiselle, it is I that ought to be grateful, for the cares which her affection takes in restoring me to life.' My mother then seated by my pillow, her whose aspect and voice diffused over my soul so pure and mild a tranquillity. She kindly also assumed the appearance of yielding to our illusions. After recommending to both good behaviour and piety, she said, 'Who knows what Heaven intends for you? Heaven is just; you are both well disposed; and love itself may render you still more worthy of being happy.' 'These,' said Mademoiselle B**, 'are indeed consoling words, and well suited to tranquillize you. I, as you see, feel no longer any anger, any resentment, in my soul. Your aunt, whose impatience had hurt me, has expressed her regret. I have embraced her; but she is still weeping.

Will not you, who are so kind-hearted, embrace her also?' 'With all my heart,' replied I; upon which my good aunt instantly made her appearance, and watered my bed with her tears. The physician, when he came in the evening, found my pulse still a little quick, but perfectly regular.

My father, on his return from the journey he had made to Clermont, declared his intention of carrying me thither, not, according to my mother's wish, for the purpose of prosecuting my studies, and going through a course of philosophy, but of entering into business. 'There has been enough of study and Latin,' said he, 'it is time to think of introducing him to some useful profession. I have procured a situation for him in the house of a rich merchant: the counting-room will be his school.' My mother opposed this resolution, with the whole force of her affection, her grief, and her tears: but seeing that she distressed my father, without persuading him, I prevail-

ed upon her to yield. 'Just let me go to Clermont,' said I, 'and, when I am there, I will find means to satisfy you both.'

Had I followed only my new attachment, I should have been of my father's opinion; for trade would, in a few years, have placed me in tolerable circumstances; But my passion for study, and the wish of my mother, which, so long as she lived, was ever my supreme law, alike forbade my listening to the counsels of love. I set out, therefore, with the intention of reserving, every evening and morning, an hour and half of my time, in which I might attend the classes; and flattered myself, that my master would be satisfied with an assurance, that all the rest of the day should be his. But he would not listen for a moment to this composition, and required me to make my option between business and study. 'What! sir,' said I, 'when I labour constantly eight hours a-day in your counting house, is not that sufficient? What would you re-

quire from a slave?' He replied, that I was welcome to be more at liberty elsewhere. I did not give him the trouble of repeating the observation, but instantly took my leave.

My whole property consisted of two half crowns, which my father had given me as pocket-money, and some sixpenny pieces which my grandmother, at taking leave, had slipped into my hand. But the want with which I was threatened formed the least of my troubles. By quitting the profession for which my father destined me, I was acting against his will; I seemed to withdraw myself from under his authority. Would he forgive me? would he not come to recal me, and fix me down to my duty? and even though he should abandon me in anger, how bitterly would he reproach my mother as having been accessory to my misconduct. I experienced a severe punishment in the very idea of the affliction that I would occasion my mother. With troubled thoughts, and with a

heavy heart, I entered a church, and had recourse to prayer, the last refuge of the unhappy. There a thought struck me, as it were by inspiration, which suddenly changed in my eyes the prospect of life, and the dream of the future.

At peace with myself, and hoping that my father also would be propitiated by the sacredness of the motive which I had to urge, my first object was to find a place to sleep in. I hired an attic apartment near the college, the whole furniture of which consisted of a bed, a table, and a chair, the whole at five pence a week; for my situation did not admit of an agreement for a longer time. To these articles, I added a hermit's vessel, and laid in a stock of bread, fresh water, and prunes.

After having fixed myself, and taken a frugal supper at my lodgings, I went to bed, but slept little; next day I wrote two letters, one to my mother, in which I stated the inhuman refusal which I had received from the inflexible merchant;

the other was to my father, in which, using the language of religion and nature, I besought him not to oppose the resolution with which I had been inspired, of devoting myself to the altar. So sincere indeed was my belief in this holy vocation, and so lively was then my faith in the plans and intentions of Providence, that, in the letter to my father, I held out almost a certain hope of no longer costing him any expence; and asked only his consent and blessing in the prosecution of my studies.

My letter furnished a text for my mother's eloquence. She imagined she saw my path marked out by the angels, and shining with light like the ladder of Jacob. My father, with less superstition, was no less pious. He was prevailed upon to allow my mother to write to me his approbation of my holy resolutions. At the same time she transmitted to me some pecuniary aid, which I made little use of; and was soon able to return it without any deduction.

I had been informed that at the college of Clermont, which was much more considerable than that of Mauriac, the masters were assisted by private tutors: this was the employment to which I looked forward; but, in order to obtain it, I must acquire, as speedily as possible, a reputation in the college, and, notwithstanding my being only fifteen, must force myself into the confidence of the masters.

I forgot to mention that, after the breaking up of the classes in the school, I had gone to receive the certificate of my rhetoric master; he gave me one as complete as possible; and, after having tenderly embraced and thanked him, as I was going away with eyes that were still moistened, I met in the corridor the head-master, who had treated me with such severity. 'Oh! sir,' said he, 'you are there; whence come you?'—'I have just been seeing Father Balme, and bidding him farewel.'—'He has doubtless given you a favourable certificate.'—'Yes, father,

very favourable; for which I feel much gratitude.'—'You are not asking mine; you think, I suppose, that you have no occasion for it.'—'Alas, father, most happy should I be to receive it, but that is what I dare not hope.'—'Come to my room,' said he, 'I will shew you how little you know my character.' I went in. He seated himself at his table, and wrote a certificate, containing praises still more extravagant, than that of my own master. He then shewed it to me, and said, before sealing it up, 'Read—if you are not satisfied, I will give you something still more ample.' As I read, I felt myself overwhelmed with confusion. I stood before Father Bis, like Cinna before Augustus. All the odious names which I had lavished upon him, appeared in my recollection like so many calumnies, of which I had been the author: the more magnanimity he displayed, the more I felt confounded and humbled in his presence: but, at length, when my eyes, filled with tears, dared to meet his, and

I saw him affected by my contrition, I said with transport, 'Do you then forgive me, father?' and threw myself into his arms. I am aware that scenes, which a man has witnessed himself, have a peculiar interest in his eyes, which others cannot feel; yet I am mistaken if, even to indifferent persons, this would not have been an affecting scene.

Being furnished with these certificates, I had only to present them to the head-master at Clermont; I might instantly, and without examination, have been admitted into the philosophical class. But this was not my object. Praise, however flattering, when only expressed in words, makes but a faint impression; I wanted something more striking, and which might bring me more immediately under their eye. I wished to be examined.

I applied to the head-master and without telling him whence I came, asked his permission to attend the philosophical class. 'From what place do you come?' asked he. 'From Bort, father.' 'Where

did you study?' Here I allowed myself to prevaricate a little. 'My master,' replied I, 'was a country curate.' An expression of disdain became visible on his lips and eyebrows; and opening a book of exercises, he proposed to me one in which there was no difficulty. I performed it with a stroke of the pen, and elegantly enough. 'And your master,' said he, reading it, 'was only a country curate?'—'Yes, father.'—'You shall translate this evening.' Chance would have it that the passage he gave me formed part of an oration of Cicero, which I had gone over in the rhetoric class; so that it was translated with ease, as quickly as the exercise had been performed. 'And is it indeed,' said he again, on reading my version, 'a country curate with whom you studied?'—'You must plainly perceive it,' said I.—'That I may perceive it still more plainly, I shall to-morrow make you compose an amplification.' This lengthened examination appeared to indicate a degree of curiosity that pro-

mised favourably. The subject he proposed was no less encouraging: it was the regret and parting adieu of a scholar who quits his relations before going to college. What could be more suited to my situation, and to the feelings of my soul! Would I could yet recal the expression which I gave to the sentiments of the mother and son! These words, inspired by nature, whose eloquent simplicity no art can imitate, were watered with my tears. The master perceived it; but what most astonished him (for there the picture, though drawn from truth, was somewhat like fancy), was the place in which, rising above myself, I introduced the young man expressing to his father the sanguine hope of one day, by dint of attention and industry, becoming the consolation, the support, and the honour of his old age, and of repaying to his other children what his education had cost him. 'And you have studied with a country *curate*,' exclaimed he still more emphatically. On this occasion I kept silence,

and only cast my eyes to the ground. 'Well,' resumed he, 'has this country curate taught you to write verses?' I answered, that I had some idea of the art, but had practised it very little. 'I shall be glad to see that,' said he, 'with a smile. Come this evening before the hour that my class meets.' The subject he gave me was, '*Wherein does fiction differ from lying?*' This was a very convenient subject for me; and was perhaps proposed by him with the view of affording me an opportunity of excusing myself.

I endeavoured to prove that fiction was a mere indulgence of gaiety, or of harmless invention: it was an ingenious art of amusing, in order to instruct: sometimes even it assumed the sublime office of embellishing truth itself; of rendering her more amiable, more interesting, and more attractive, by throwing over her a transparent veil interwoven with flowers. Lying, on the contrary, was easily proved to arise from the mean-

ness of a soul which disguises its own thoughts and opinions; from the impudence of a deceitful character, which, in order to gain respect, alters and disfigures the truth, and whose language bears the stamp of cunning and malice, of fraud and atrocity.

'Now tell me,' said the artful Jesuit, 'whether this be fiction or lying, that you have told me of your master being a country curate; for I am pretty certain that you have studied at Mauriac under our society.' 'Though both be true,' said I, 'yet, father, I admit, that had my intention been to deceive you, I should have been telling a lie; but though I delayed to mention what you now know, it was from no design of concealing it, or of allowing you to continue in an error. It was of importance that you should know me better, than even by the very good certificates which I can produce, and which you shall now see. Upon these testimonies, you would have granted, without examination, my

first request; but I have a more essential one to make. While studying, I must also teach; you must give me scholars, and thereby enable me to gain my bread. The family to which I belong is numerous and poor; I am anxious to be no longer a burden to them; till I can assist them, I seek what every unfortunate man may ask without blushing, employment and bread.' 'Ah! child,' said he, 'how can you at your age be listened to, obeyed, and respected, by your equals? You are scarce fifteen.' 'True; but, father, do you reckon for nothing the influence of misfortune? Consider how much it promotes the authority of reason, and hastens the maturity of age. Make a trial of my character; perhaps you may find it sedate enough to make my youth be forgotten.' 'I will see,' said he, 'I will consult.'—'No, father, there is no time for consultation. I must be placed immediately on the list of assistants, and begin to teach. It matters not to what class my scholars belong. Be assured

they will do their duty. You will be satisfied with my conduct.' He promised, though rather faintly; and, having received his ticket, I went to begin my logical studies.

The very next day, I saw reason to think that the professor had some favour for me. The logic of Port Royal, and the practice of speaking Latin, both which I had learned with my country curate, gave me a considerable superiority over my companions. I was eager to display my powers, and omitted nothing that could bring me into notice. Yet weeks passed on without any news from the head master. I waited quietly, not wishing to teaze him. Sometimes, indeed, I threw myself in his way, and bowed to him with a beseeching look; but he took scarcely any notice of me. I went up, in very bad spirits, to my lofty habitation, where, left to my own thoughts, I sat down in tears to a repast that might have suited a hermit. Luckily I had excellent bread.

Madame Clement, a worthy little woman, who lodged under me, and had a kitchen, felt a curiosity to know where mine was situated. She called on me one morning; 'Sir,' said she, 'I hear you always, at the dinner hour, going up alone to your room, where there is no fire, and nobody goes up after you. Excuse me; but I feel uneasy about your situation.' I acknowledged, that at this particular time, my circumstances were not very flourishing; but added, that I should presently be supplied with ample means of subsistence; that I was qualified to teach a school; and that the Jesuits were to provide for me. 'The Jesuits, indeed!' said she, 'depend upon it, their heads are quite otherwise taken up; they will amuse you with promises, but will leave you to starve. Why do you not go to Riom, to the fathers of the Oratory; they will give you fewer fine words, but they will do more for you than they promise.' It is needless to say that I spoke to a Jansenist. I felt grateful for

the concern she took in my welfare, and expressing a disposition to follow her advice, requested some information about the fathers of the Oratory. 'They are worthy men,' said she, 'whom the Jesuites detest, and would willingly destroy. But it is dinner time; come, and eat my soup. I will tell you more.' I accepted her invitation; and, though the repast was certainly very frugal, I never dined more heartily in my life. My spirits were particularly revived by two or three small glasses of wine, which she made me drink. In one hour, I learned all that was to be known concerning the animosity of the Jesuits against the Oratory, and the jealous rivalship between the two schools. My neighbour added, that if I went to Riom, I should carry with me good recommendations. I thanked her for these proffered services; and being placed on high ground by her intentions, and my own hopes, I went to call on the head master. He appeared surprised at seeing me, and coldly inquired what I

wanted with him. This reception fully convinced me of what my neighbour had said. 'I have called, father,' replied I, 'to take leave of you.'—'You are going, then.'—'Yes, father, I am going to Riom, where the fathers of the Oratory will give me as many scholars as I please.' —'What! child, you are about to leave us. You, educated in our schools, turn out a deserter!'—'Alas, I do it with reluctance; but you can do nothing for me; and I am assured that these good fathers—' 'These good fathers are but too expert in seducing and gaining over credulous young people like you. But be assured, child, they have neither the same degree of credit nor power that we have.' 'Shew it then, father, by giving me an employment that will support me.'—'Well, I am contriving, I am endeavouring to do it; and, meantime, I will provide for your wants.'—'Father, what do you call providing for my wants? Know, that my mother would sooner want the necessaries of life, than allow a stranger to assist

me. But I will no longer receive aid even from my family; I must subsist on the fruit of my own labour. Do you give me the means, or I will seek them elsewhere.'—'No! no! you must not go,' says he, 'I forbid it. Your professor esteems you. Let us call on him together.' He took me immediately to the professor's house. 'Do you know, father,' said he, 'what is like to become of this child? He is invited to Riom. The fathers of the Oratory, these dangerous men, are attempting to make him a proselyte. He is going to throw himself away, but we must save him.' My professor took up the affair still more warmly than the head master. They both gave a wonderful account of me to all the masters in the school. My fortune was now made; I got a school, which, being attended, by twelve scholars, who paid each four livres a month, yielded an income above all my wants. I got a comfortable lodging; I lived well; and, by Easter, I was able to dress myself de-

cently as an abbé, a thing which I had the greatest desire for, both that my father might be the more assured of the sincerity of my vocation, and that I might appear in the college under a respectable character.

On leaving my garret, Madame Clement, on whom I called, to inform her of what was doing for me, did not express all the pleasure that I could have wished. 'Ah,' said she, 'I should have been much happier to have seen you go to Rióm. The studies there are good and holy.' I besought her to retain her kindness, in case I should again stand in need of it; and, even during my opulence, I sometimes visited her.

My ecclesiastical dress, the decorum which it imposed, together with that desire of personal consideration, which the example of Amalvy had formerly excited, produced happy effects on my character, particularly, that of rendering me reserved and circumspect in forming acquaintances. I was in no haste to choose my

friends, and chose only a small number. There were four of us, who were always together in our parties of pleasure; that is to say, in our walks. We had subscribed, at common cost, which was very small, with an old bookseller, who agreed to furnish us with materials of reading; and as good books are fortunately the most common, we read only such as were excellent. The great orators, the great poets, the best writers of the last century, joined with some of the present, though of these the bookseller had but few, went from hand to hand. In our walks, each gave an account of what he had been reading, so that our conversations consisted almost wholly of these studious conferences. In one of our walks to Beauregard, the country house belonging to the bishopric, we had the happiness of seeing the venerable Massillon. So kind was the reception we met with from that illustrious old man, his accent and the tone of his voice made so lively and tender an impression on me, as to form

one of the most pleasing recollections which I retain of my youthful years.

At that age, when the affections of the mind and soul have so sudden a communication, when thought and feeling so rapidly act and re-act on each other, there is no one whose fancy, on seeing a great man, has not stamped on his forehead the features that characterise his soul and his genius. Thus, amid the wrinkles of that countenance already decayed, and in those eyes that were soon to be extinguished, I thought myself yet able to distinguish the expression of that eloquence, so feeling, so tender, so lofty, so profoundly penetrating, with which the perusal of his sermons had just enchanted me. He allowed us to mention them, and to pay him the homage of the religious tears which they had caused us to shed.

My labour was excessive, during the year that I attended the logic class, as, without reckoning my private studies, I had to prepare my scholars, evening and

morning, for three other classes. I then went home to enjoy a little repose; nor was it, I confess, without some feeling of pride, that I appeared before my father, well dressed, with a number of little presents for my sisters, and with some money which I had saved. My mother embraced me and wept for joy. My father received me kindly, but with less warmth. All the rest of the family seemed enchanted at seeing me.

The joy of Mademoiselle B** was not quite so unmingled, and I felt very awkward and uneasy at appearing before her in the dress of an abbé. It is true, that by this change I had not quitted her for another, but still I had quitted her, and that was enough. I knew not how to behave on the occasion. I asked my mother's advice on this delicate subject. 'My son,' said she, 'she has a right to express chagrin and irritation; nay, even something still more poignant, coldness and disdain. You must bear it all, must ever express for her the tenderest esteem,

and must treat with infinite forbearance a heart which you have wounded.

Mademoiselle B** was mild and indulgent. She behaved with a reserved and dignified politeness, avoiding carefully, however, any private conversation with me. In company, therefore, we were on so good a footing together, as left no ground to believe that we had formerly been on a better.

The second year of my attendance on the class of philosophy was still more laborious than the first. My school was increased; I paid it the utmost attention; and having, besides, disputations to maintain, on general subjects, long night-watchings were necessary to prepare me for this exercise.

On the day when, by a public appearance, I had ended my course of philosophy, I learned that fatal event, which plunged my family and myself into an abyss of affliction.

After my disputation, my friends and I met as usual, in the professor's room, to

share a repast, which joy was wont to enliven; yet, in the congratulations addressed to me, I saw nothing but sadness. As I had solved very well the difficulties that had been proposed to me, I was surprised that my companions, that the professor himself, should not wear a face of greater satisfaction. 'Ah!' said I, 'had I done well, you would not all have looked so sad.'—'Alas! my dear child,' said the professor, 'the sadness at which you are surprised is indeed deep and sincere; would to heaven it had arisen from your success being less brilliant than it has really been. I must announce to you a much more cruel misfortune. You have no longer a father.' I sunk under the blow, and remained a quarter of an hour without speech or colour. Restored to life and to tears, I wished to set out immediately to save my poor mother from despair. But had I set out without a guide, night would have overtaken me, in passing over the mountains. It was necessary to wait till day-break. I had to

travel twelve long leagues on a hired horse, which, though I pushed it as hard as possible, went very slowly. During this mournful journey, one thought, one image alone, was present to my mind, employed it without ceasing, and scarcely could the united strength of my soul resist its impression; but I must soon summon courage to view the reality, to contemplate it in its gloomiest horrors.

I come to the door at midnight; I knock; I tell my name; instantly arises a plaintive murmur, a confusion of voices in distress. The whole family rise; the door is opened; and, on entering, I am encircled by this distracted family; mother, children, old women, all half naked, like spectres, extend their arms to me, with the most piercing and heart-rending cries. I found suddenly within me a new strength, such doubtless as Nature reserves for extreme misery. I never felt so superior to myself. An enormous weight of grief was laid upon me,

I did not sink under it. I opened my arms, my bosom, to this crowd of unhappy beings. I embraced them all; and, with the firmness of a man inspired by Heaven, I, who weep so easily, now shewed no weakness, and shed no tear. 'My mother, my brothers, my sisters,' said I, 'we are suffering the greatest of calamities; but let us not sink under its pressure. My children, you lose a father; you find one again; I will supply his place; I am, I will be, your father; I take upon myself all his duties, and you are orphans no more.' At these words, floods of tears, but tears mingled with less bitterness, flowed from their eyes. 'Ah!' cried my mother, 'my son, my dear child, how well I knew you!' My brothers and sisters, my aunts, my grandmother, fell on their knees. This affecting scene would have lasted the whole night, had I been able to support it. Overwhelmed with fatigue, I asked for a bed. 'Ah!' said my mother, 'there is no bed in the house, but—' Tears choked her utterance. 'Give it me,' said I, 'I will lie down

without reluctance.' I lay down, but slept not; my nerves were too deeply agitated. The whole night I beheld the image of my father, as distinct, as deeply impressed on my soul, as if he had been present. I sometimes thought I actually saw him. I felt no terror; I extended my arms; I spoke. 'Ah!' said I, 'why is it not real! why are you not what I seem to behold! why cannot you answer me, and say at least, if you are satisfied with my conduct!' After this long watching, and this troubled reverie, which amounted not to a dream, the approach of day-light was grateful. My mother, who had not slept any more than myself, was waiting till I awoke. Whenever she heard a noise, she came in. She was terrified at the change in my appearance; my skin seemed to have been dyed in saffron.

A physician was called, who said that this was an effect of deep grief suppressed, and that mine might produce the most formidable consequences, if something were not done to remove it. 'A-

journey,' said he, 'a change of scene, is the best and surest remedy which I am able to point out. But do not mention it as a diversion, to which a person in deep distress is ever averse. We must, without his knowledge, seek to withdraw him from his sorrow; we must deceive, in order to cure him.'

The old curate, who had given me instructions during the vacation, offered to take me home with him to the centre of the diocese where his residence lay, and to keep me there as long as my health should require. But, for this journey, a motive must be given; and it was afforded by the design, which I myself entertained, of taking the tonsure from the hands of my bishop, before proceeding farther; for one of my hopes was, by a happy chance, to succeed in obtaining a simple benefice.

'I intend,' said my mother, 'to spend this year in arranging and regulating the household affairs. For you, my son, hasten to enter into the career, to which

God calls you; make yourself known to our holy bishop, and ask his advice.'

The physician was in the right. There are sorrows which attach us more strongly than pleasure itself. Never, during the happiest period, when the paternal mansion was for me so sweet and so smiling, did I quit it with such pain, as now when it had become the house of mourning. Of six louis, which I had saved, my mother allowed me to leave her only three; and, being still abundantly rich, I went with my old friend to his curacy of St. Bonet.

BOOK II.

THE tranquillity, the silence of the hamlet of Abloville, in which I now write, reminds me of the peace which my soul regained during my residence at the village of St. Bonet. The country round was not so smiling, nor so fruitful. The loaded branches of the apple and cherry tree did not shade the corn fields; yet there, too, Nature displayed a certain species of embellishment and plenty. She had galleries formed by overshadowing vine-branches, saloons of fruit-trees, and carpets of green turf; the cock held there his court of love; the hen tended her little family; the chesnut-tree majestically displayed its shade, and lavished its gifts; the fields, the meadows, the woods, country labour, and fishing in the ponds, formed rural scenes sufficiently interest-

ing to employ a vacant mind. Mine, after the long labour of my studies, and the cruel shock which it had received from the death of my father, stood in need of this recreation.

My curate had some books suited to his profession, which was also to be mine. I was destined for the church; he directed my studies with that view; he gave me a relish for the perusal of the sacred volume, and pointed out, in the fathers of the church, good examples of evangelical eloquence. This old man was naturally of a gay disposition, which, however he indulged with me only so far as seemed necessary to banish daily some shade of my gloomy melancholy. It dispersed by degrees, and joy found access to my heart. That sentiment, along with friendship, presided twice a month, over dinners which the neighbouring curates partook together, and which they gave by turns. I was admitted to these entertainments, where, through emulation, I acquired a taste for French poetry. Almost

all these curates wrote French verses and sent each other poetical invitations with whose natural gaiety I was much delighted. In imitation of them, I made some attempts, which were favourably received. Happy society of poets, where no one was envious, no one was difficult to please; where each was as satisfied with himself and with others, as if the circle had been wholly composed of Horaces and Anacreons.

This leisure was not the object of my journey, nor did I forget that I had come to Limoges for the purpose of taking the tonsure; but the bishop gave it formally only once a year, and the period was past. I must either wait, or solicit a particular favour. I chose rather to submit to the common rule, for the following reason: —Before the annual ceremony of tonsure, the candidates resided, for a short time, at the convent of the Sulpicians, who professed to observe the character of the candidates, their natural disposition, the talents which they promised to display,

and to make a report of these things to the bishop. I stood in need of being recommended to him, which I could not expect, without being first observed, mentioned, distinguished among the crowd. Necessity, the mother of invention, prompted me to avail myself of this opportunity of being noticed by the Sulpicians, and by the bishop. But to stay with my poor curate, during these six months of expectation, would have been making myself too great a burden to him. Happily, among his friends and neighbours, there was a worthy nobleman, the marquis of Linars, who expressed to me, through his chaplain, an earnest desire that I would devote this period of leisure to one of his sons, a young knight of Malta; a fine boy, but whose education had been hitherto neglected. I prevailed on my friend the curate to give his consent to this proposal, and then engaged myself. I had every reason to be satisfied with the marks of good-will and esteem with which I was honoured in this illus-

trious house, which was frequented by all the nobility of the province. The marchioness herself, being of the Mortemart family, and educated at Paris, was a little haughty in her general deportment. With me, however, she was always kind and frank; because I behaved to her with that simple and unaffected politeness which has always made me feel at my ease in society, without danger of becoming offensive to any one. When the time arrived for receiving the tonsure, I went to the seminary, where I found myself, with twelve other candidates, placed under the eye of three Sulpicians. The gravity and silence which prevailed, and the devout exercises in which we were constantly employed, appeared, at first, unfavourable to my views; but, while I was giving up all hopes of bringing myself into notice, an unexpected opportunity occurred. We were allowed, twice a-day, to take an hour's amusement, in a little garden planted with rows of lime-trees. My

companions diverted themselves with playing at quoits, while I, having no relish for the game, took a walk by myself. One of our directors came to me one day, and asked why I indulged in solitude, and did not associate with my companions? I replied, that I was the eldest, and, at my age, found it agreeable to be occasionally by myself, for the purpose of recollecting, classifying, and arranging, my ideas; that I wished to fix in my mind what I had read and studied; and my memory being unfortunately deficient, it was by deep meditation only, that I could supply that defect. This reply drew on a conversation. The Sulpician wished to know where I had studied; what system I had maintained in my disputations; and for what kind of reading I felt most inclination. I answered all these questions. A director of the seminary of Limoges, did not, as you may suppose, while he examined a boy of eighteen, expect to find a great store of knowledge; my little repository, there-

fore, must have appeared to him a treasure.

I augured well from the success of my first attempt, when at the hour of our evening walk, instead of one Sulpician there arrived two. I now felt the value of my reading at Clermont. I had mentioned, that my peculiar predilection was for eloquence, and had rapidly named such of our Christian orators as I admired most. This subject was again introduced. I had now to analyse them, to point out distinctly their different characters, and to quote, from each, the passages that had struck me with the greatest astonishment, filled me with the highest emotion, or transported me by the brilliancy and charms of their eloquence. The two men, of whom I spoke with the greatest enthusiasm, were Bourdaloue and Massillon. But I had not time to unfold all my ideas on this subject. It was not till next day that I enlarged upon their merits. I could describe the plan of all their sermons; the extracts I had written from

them were full in my recollection; their introductions, their divisions, their happiest strokes, their very texts, crowded on my memory. On this day, indeed, that faculty performed its office well; instead of two Sulpicians, as the evening before, three were now my auditors, who, after listening in silence, went all away, as if lost in astonishment.

From this time, they walked with me constantly during our leisure hours; and the rest of our conversation turned more generally on the finest funeral orations of Bossuet and Flechier, upon some sermons of La Rue, and upon the small collection of those of Cheminais, which I knew almost by heart. Then, I know not how, we came to speak of the poets. I acknowledged that I had read some, and mentioned the great Corneille. 'And have you,' asked one of the Sulpicians, 'read the tender Racine?' 'Yes,' said I, 'I plead guilty; but Massillon had read him before me, and had learned from him to address the heart with such feeling and

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beauty. And think you,' asked I, 'that Fenelon, the author of Telemachus, had not read twenty times over the story of Dido's love, in the Æneid.'

The mention of Virgil led our conversation to the classic authors; and these gentlemen, who knew not the necessity I had been under of studying deeply the Latin authors, were surprised to see me so fully acquainted with them. I indulged myself very fully, as you may suppose, in the pleasure of displaying this knowledge. Verse and prose flowed as from an inexhaustible fountain; and at last, I appeared to stop, only from the apprehension of overpowering them altogether.

I concluded, by a display of my learning recently acquired at S^t^. Bonet. The books of Moses and of Solomon had been already on the carpet; and I was come to the holy fathers, when the day arrived for receiving the tonsure. On this day, therefore, after having the ecclesiastical characters conferred upon us, we were conducted, by our three directors, into

the presence of the bishop. He received all with equal kindness; but, while I was retiring with my companions, he sent for me. My heart beat.

'My child,' said he, 'you are not a stranger to me; you have been recommended to me by your mother. She is, indeed, an excellent woman, for whom I have the greatest esteem. Where do you intend to complete your studies.' I replied, that I had not yet formed any resolution upon the subject; that I had just been so unfortunate as to lose my father: and that my family, who were numerous and poor, depended wholly upon me; it would be necessary for me, therefore, to find some university which, during the course of my studies, might afford means, both of subsisting myself, and of affording aid to my mother and to our children. 'And to *your* children,' replied he, affected by this expression. 'Yes, my lord, I am their second father; while I live, I am determined to fulfil the duties of that character. 'Listen,' said he, 'the arch-

bishop of Bourges, one of our worthiest prelates, is my friend; I can recommend you to him, and if he attends to my recommendation, as I hope he will, your only care, for yourself and friends, will then be to deserve his protection, by making a proper use of the talents which Heaven has bestowed on you.' I thanked the bishop for his good intentions; but I asked time to inform my mother, and to receive her advice, not doubting that the proposal would be as agreeable to her, as it was to myself.

I then went to take leave of the worthy curate, who was transported with joy on learning this offer, which he called an interposition of Heaven in my favour. What would he have said, could he have foreseen that this archbishop of Bourges would be grand almoner, cardinal, the minister for filling up vacant benefices; and that the eloquence, to which I intended to devote myself, would have the most interesting opportunities of being distinguished at court. Certainly, for a young

ecclesiastic, who, with much emulation, united considerable talents, a splendid career was opened. I have had occasion more than once to admire how our destiny is entangled and disentangled, and of how many thin and brittle threads its fabric is composed.

On my arrival at Linars, I wrote my mother, that I had taken the tonsure under the most favourable auspices; that I had received from the bishop the most affecting expressions of kindness; that I would come, as soon as possible, and give her an account of what had passed. The same day, I received from her, by express, a letter, which her tears had rendered almost illegible. 'Is it true,' asked she, 'that you have been so foolish as to enlist in the company of the count de Linars, the marquis's brother, and captain in the Enghien regiment? If you have been so unhappy, inform me. I will sell the whole of my little property to ransom my son. O God! is this indeed the son you gave me?'

Conceive the despair into which I was thrown by this letter. Mine had made a circuit in its way to Bort; my mother would not receive it for two days; and, meanwhile, I beheld her in despair. I instantly wrote, that what she had been told was a horrible falsehood; that this criminal folly had never once entered my thoughts; that my heart was rent on account of the distress she must suffer; and that I asked pardon for being the innocent cause of it: but she ought to have known me too well to believe this absurd calumny; and I would soon shew, that my conduct was neither that of a libertine, nor of a giddy young fool. The express set out immediately; but so long as, by counting the hours, it appeared that my mother was yet undeceived, I was myself on the rack.

The distance from Linars to Bort was, if I remember right, sixteen leagues, and, though I had besought the express to travel the whole night, how could I trust that he would not take a little rest. None could

I take, nor did I cease to bathe my pillow in tears, from the thought of those that my mother was shedding; when I heard a trampling of horses in the court. I rose, and discovered the count de Linars newly arrived. Without taking time to dress, I was flying to meet him; but he prevented me, and entering, like a man in despair, 'Ah! sir,' said he, 'how criminal must you think me, in consequence of a rash action, which has agonized your family, and has thrown your mother into a distress which I cannot relieve. She believes you enlisted with me. In a state bordering on distraction, she threw herself at my feet, and offered, as the price of your discharge, her golden cross, her ring, her purse, and every thing she had in the world. In vain did I assure her, in vain did I protest that no such engagement existed. She considers this as a refusal to set you at liberty. Set out instantly; let your presence dispel her fears.'—'Ah! sir, who can have given currency to this fatal rumour?'—'Sir,'

said he, 'it is myself. I am in despair; I implore your forgiveness. Being in want of new recruits, I was endeavouring to raise a few in your village. I found there some young people, who had a desire to enlist, but who were still undecided. I saw that your example only was necessary, in order to determine them. I yielded to the temptation, and told them that they would have you for a companion, for that I had enlisted you; thus the report spread.'—'Ah! sir,' I indignantly exclaimed, 'can such a falsehood have come from the lips of a man like you.'—'Overwhelm me,' said he, 'with the most mortifying reproaches; I deserve them all: but this stratagem, the effects of which I did not at all foresee, has shewn me a maternal character, such as I never saw before. Go, and comfort your mother; she has much need to see you again.'

The marquis of Linars, to whom his brother acknowledged his fault, and all the mischief it had occasioned, having

given me a horse, and a guide, I set out next day. But I set out in a fever, for my blood was inflamed; and, towards evening, a paroxysm seized me, at the very time that the guide had lost his way amid bye-roads. I sat shivering on horseback; and, in an hour, night would have overtaken us in the open country, when I saw a man crossing my way. I called to him, to inquire where I was, and if we were far from the village to which my guide was conducting me. 'You are more than three leagues from it,' said he, 'and you are out of the road.' But, as he was speaking, he had recognized me. It was a young townsman of mine. 'Is it you,' said he, addressing me by name; 'by what chance do I meet you at such an hour among these wilds? You seem to be ill. Where are you going to pass the night?'—'Where are *you* going?' said I.—'I am going,' said he, 'to visit one of my uncles, in a village at no great distance.'—'Well,' returned I, 'do you think your uncle would give me shelter in his house

till to-morrow; for I am in great want of rest.' 'Your accommodation,' said he, 'will be poor, but you will meet with a hearty welcome.' I went along with him, and found bread and milk for my guide, and for myself a good bed of fresh straw, with toast and water for supper. I had occasion for nothing else, being still in a very strong fever.

On waking next day, (for I had slept some hours), I found that this village contained a parish church. It was Assumption-day, and, though very ill, I wished to go to mass. In this church, a young abbé was an object of attention. The curate observed me, and, when mass was over, invited me to come into the vestry. 'Is it possible,' said he, on hearing my story, 'that, in a village where I am, a member of the church has slept upon straw?' He took me home with him; and never was hospitality more cordially nor more generously practised. I was weakened by fasting and the fatigue of travelling. He wished to strengthen

me'; and being convinced that the fever was in the blood only, not in the humours, he alleged that a copious supply of fresh and good chyle would be the most effectual remedy. Nor was he mistaken. I dined with him, and never eat so excellent a soup. It was made by his niece. This niece was just eighteen, and resembled the virgins drawn by Raphael and Correggio. She was my nurse while the curate was saying vespers at church; nor, amid all my sickness, was I insensible to her care. 'My uncle,' said she, 'will not let you set out in your present state. He says, it is six long leagues from this to Bort; and that your strength must be recruited before you attempt travelling. And then, why should you be in such haste? Are you not very well here? You shall have a good bed; I will make it myself; I will bring you soups, or, if you prefer it, warm milk taken from a goat with my own hand. You come to us pale; and we must absolutely send you away blooming like a rose.'—Ah! made-

moiselle,' said I, 'it would be most agreeable to me to continue with you till my health was quite restored; but, if you knew in what distress my mother is, on my account! how impatient she is to see me; and how impatient I myself must be to throw myself into her arms.'—'The more you love each other,' said she, 'the more ought you to save her from the affliction of seeing you in this condition. A sister has more courage; and here I am, as it were, your sister.'—'Any one would believe so,' said I, 'who saw the tender care you are taking of me.'—'Yes,' said she, 'we do certainly feel an interest in you. My uncle and I are compassionate to every one, but we seldom meet with such patients as you.' The curate came back from the church. He insisted on my sending back the horse and guide; and took upon himself the whole charge of conveying me home.'

Had my mind been at ease, I should have found this an enchanting residence, like that of Rinaldo in the palace of Ar-

mida; for the simple Marcelline was an Armida to me, and her innocence made her only the more dangerous. But, though my mother would already be undeceived by my two letters, nothing could have kept me at a distance from her, beyond the day, when feeling the violence of my fever abated, and myself a little recruited by two nights of sound sleep, I was able to mount on horseback.

My sister (for Marcelline had taken this name, and I even used it when we were by ourselves) did not view my departure without an affliction, which she was unable to conceal. 'Adieu, Mr. Abbé,' said she, before her uncle; 'take care of your health; do not forget us; give your mother a kiss from me; tell her I love her dearly.' At these words, tears swelled into her eyes; and, as she retired to conceal them, the curate said, 'You see she is affected by the name of mother; it is not long since she lost her own. Adieu, sir, I join with her in say-

ing, do not forget us, we will often talk of you.'

I found my mother perfectly at ease, with respect to my conduct; but my sickly appearance alarmed her. I relieved her anxiety; for, indeed, I found myself much better from the regimen on which the curate had put me. We both wrote to thank him for his kind hospitality. And by return of the horse, on which I had come, we sent a few slight presents, among which my mother slipped in, for Marcelline, a little piece of dress, which, though simple and cheap, was elegant, and in good taste. After which, my health hourly improving, we were both entirely occupied in arranging my plans of life.

The patronage of the bishop, his recommendation, and the prospect of advancement which it offered, appeared to my mother to be every thing that could be wished; and I was then myself of the same opinion. My stars, and I may now

say, my happy stars, changed my design. In order to describe how this happened, I must again recur to what is past.

I have reason to believe, that after the examination, by the head-master, at Clermont, the Jesuits had cast their eyes on me. Two of my school-fellows, who had particularly distinguished themselves, were already caught in their nets. They wished, perhaps, to draw me in also; and a curious occurrence, which I still remember, convinces me that they had at least some thoughts of it.

During the short intervals of leisure, which I enjoyed at Clermont, I used it to amuse myself with drawing: and, having a taste for it, I was supposed also to have some skill. I had a correct eye, and a steady hand; nothing more was necessary for the purpose, which one day induced the rector to send for me. 'My boy,' said he, 'I understand you amuse yourself with drawing architectural plans. I have chosen you to make one of our school; examine the building well, and,

after having exactly laid down the ground plan, sketch out its elevation. Pay the greatest attention to it, for your performance will be laid before his majesty.

Exceedingly proud of this commission, I began to execute it; and bestowed on it, as you may believe, the most scrupulous attention. But, from being too anxious to do it well, I did it exceedingly ill. One of the wings of the building had a story which the other wing had not. I was shocked with this inequality, and corrected it by raising one wing as high as the other. 'Oh child!' said the rector, 'what have you done?'—'Father,' said I, 'I have made the building regular.'—'The very thing you ought not to have done. The intention of this drawing is to shew the contrary, first to the father confessor, and through him to the minister, and the king himself For our object is to obtain a grant from the crown to erect the storey which is wanting in one of the two wings.' I proceeded in-

stantly to correct my mistake; and when the rector was satisfied, I said, 'Will you allow me, father, to make one observation? The school which has been built for you is handsome, but there is no church attached to it.'—'Your observation,' said he, 'is very just; but you must have remarked also that we have no garden.'—'I have been suprized at that also.'—'Be not uneasy; we shall have both.'—'How so, father? I see no vacant space.'—'What! do you not see, beyond the wall which encloses our school, that church, belonging to the Augustine fathers, and that garden attached to their convent?'—'Well, father.'—'Well, that garden, that church shall be ours; Providence seems, with this express view, to have placed them so near us?'—'But, father, are the Augustines no longer to have either garden or church?'—'On the contrary, they will have a handsomer church, and a still larger garden; God forbid we should do them any injury; while we dislodge, we will also in-

demnify them.'—'So you are to dislodge the Augustine fathers?'—'Yes, child; and their house will be an infirmary, an hospital for our old men.'—'Nothing certainly can be more just; but I am only thinking where you are to accommodate the Augustine fathers.'—'Be not at all uneasy upon that head; they will have the convent, the church, and the garden of the Cordeliers. Won't they be much better and more comfortable there than here?'—'Very well; but what becomes of the Cordeliers?—I foresaw your objection, and am prepared to answer it. Clermont and Mont-Ferrand were formerly two cities; now they compose only one; and Mont-Ferrand is only a suburb of Clermont: thus we say Clermont-Ferrand. Now, at Mont-Ferrand, you know, the Cordeliers have a magnificent convent; and you may well suppose that there is no occasion for a city having two convents of cordeliers. Thus, by transporting those of Clermont to Mont-Ferrand, we do no harm to any one; so that here,

without injury to one of our brethren, we are in possession of the church, the garden, the convent of these worthy Augustine fathers, who will think themselves much obliged by the exchange; for we must always behave to each other like good neighbours. To conclude, my child, what I am now telling you is a secret within the society; but you are not an alien from it; and I take pleasure even now in considering you as one of ourselves.'

Such, so far as I recollect, was this dialogue, which Blaise Pascal would have found a good subject for ridicule; but which appeared to me quite sincere and natural. From it, however, I now infer, that it was not without preconcerted design that Father Hoaillac, professor of rhetoric at Clermont, as he was passing through Bort in his way to Toulouse, came to dine with me.

My mother, who had no suspicion, any more than I, of what was his object, received him in the best manner she could; and

during dinner he made her happy by giving an extravagant account of my success in the art of teaching. According to him, my scholars were so distinguished in their classes, that it was easy, on reading the different exercises, to recognize those who were under my charge. There appeared to me to be too much flattery in all this, but I did not see its aim.

Towards the close of dinner, my mother having, according to the custom of the country, left us alone at table, my jesuit found himself at his ease. 'Now,' said he, 'let us talk of your plans. What is your intention? what pursuit do you mean to enter upon?' I disclosed to him the offers made by the bishop, of which, I said, my mother and I intended to avail ourselves. After listening with a thoughtful and contemptuous air—'I know not,' says he, 'in what respect these offers appear to you flattering and seductive: for my part, I think them quite unworthy of you. In the first place, the title of Doctor of Bourges is fallen into such discredit,

as to be quite ridiculous; this degree, instead of raising your character, would lower it. Then.... but this is a subject too delicate to be mentioned. There are truths which must not be told, unless to an intimate friend; nor am I entitled to explain myself so freely with you.' This artful reserve had all the effect that he expected. 'Explain yourself, father,' said I; 'and be assured that I shall feel grateful to you for having opened your heart to me.' 'Well,' said he, 'you will have it so; and, indeed, I feel that, at so critical a period, it would be wrong in me to disguise my opinion upon an affair, where you appear to have no certainty of meeting with any thing except mortifications.' 'Mortifications!' exclaimed I, with astonishment, 'What mortifications?' 'Your bishop,' continued he, 'is the best man in the world; I am convinced of the goodness of his intention, and that he wishes nothing but your good. But how can he think he is serving any one by making him an

humble dependent on this archbishop of Bourges? During the five years that you attend theology, you will receive a pension from him; you will be supported by his benevolence. I am willing also to believe that he will afford your family some charitable aid;' (my blood froze at this expression); ' but ought you and your mother to be on his poor's list? Are you reduced so low as that?'—' Most assuredly not,' exclaimed I.—' Yet this, for a long time, is all the offer made to you, all the hope that is held out.'—' I understood,' said I, ' that the church has funds, the employment of which is entrusted to the bishops, which they dispose of, but have no right to turn to their own use; so that these funds may be received from them with as little disgrace as a benefice.'—' Ay, ay,' said he, ' that is just the lure which they throw out to the ambition of young persons. But when will these advantages come, and how dear will they cost? You know not the spirit of despotism in which these

dilatory benefactors tyrannize over those who are under their protection. Their great fear is, lest they should escape: and they lengthen, as much as possible, the state of dependence and subjection in which they keep these poor creatures. They bestow their favours with ease and liberality upon interest and birth; but if any favour is ever extended to unfortunate merit, it is dearly purchased.'— 'This,' said I, 'is shewing me many thorns and briars where I saw only flowers. But, consider my situation, loaded with a family which I am bound to support, and which stands in need of my aid, and say, what you would advise me to do.' 'I advise you,' says he, 'to choose a situation where you may protect yourself, and not depend on the protection of others. I know a profession in which every man that distinguishes himself possesses credit and powerful friends. That profession is mine. All the avenues of fortune and ambition are shut against us as individuals; but they are open to all in whom we are

interested.'—'You advise me then to become a jesuit?'—'Yes, undoubtedly; and by means with which we are acquainted, your mother will be rendered comfortable; her children will be educated;—the state itself will provide for them; and when they arrive at manhood, the extent of our connections will enable us to provide for them with the utmost facility. For this reason, the flower of the youth, educated in our seminaries, aspire to, and solicit the advantage of being received into this powerful society; and, for the same reason, the heads of the greatest families wish to be connected with it.' 'I have always,' said I, 'regarded your society as a fountain of instruction; and have said a hundred times, that a man who wishes to acquire information, and to cultivate his talents, cannot do better than spend his life with you. But there are two things in your regulations to which I am averse; the length of the noviciate, and the obligation to begin by teaching the lower classes.' 'As

to the noviciate,' said he, 'the law is invariable; you must undergo two years of probation. But, with regard to the lower classes, I think I can answer for your being exempted from that duty.' The wine which we drank during this conversation happened to be very heady. The jesuit's brain got heated; he expatiated loudly on the respect which his society enjoyed, and the lustre which was thence reflected on its members. 'Nothing,' said he, 'can be compared to the pleasures which a jesuit, who is a man of merit, enjoys in the world; every door is open to him; he is everywhere secure of the most favourable, the most flattering, reception.'

'I am now determined,' said I, 'to decline with thanks the bishop's proposal. The other subject demands a little longer reflection. But I propose going to Toulouse; and there, if my mother agree, I will follow the remaining part of your advice.'

I communicated to my mother the ob-

servations of the jesuit, on the unpleasant circumstance of going to Bourges to depend on the archbishop's charity. She felt the same degree of delicacy and pride, and this spirit dictated the two letters we wrote to the bishop. I had now only to consult her on the plan of becoming a jesuit: but I never could summon the requisite degree of courage. Her strength and my own were alike unequal to this consultation; it was only at a distance from each other that we could reason coolly. I reserved it as the subject of a letter from Toulouse; so that I arrived there still undecided as to what part I should take.

Shall I say, that, on the road, I again missed an opportunity of making my fortune? An Aurillac muleteer, who passed his life on the road from Clermont to Toulouse, undertook to convey me. I rode on one of his mules, while he, most commonly on foot, travelled by my side. 'Mr. Abbé,' said he, 'you will be obliged to spend some days at my house,

where business detains me. For God's sake, devote this time to curing my daughter of her silly devotion. I have no other child, and by no entreaties can I get her to marry; her obstinacy distracts me.' The commission was delicate; but I thought it amusing, and willingly undertook it.

I had formed certainly a very humble idea of that man's dwelling, who was constantly trotting after his mules, over the roughest roads, with his body sometimes drenched with rain, sometimes covered with snow. I was therefore not a little surprized, on entering, to see a convenient, well furnished, and remarkably neat house; while a kind of nun, clad in grey, young, fresh, and handsome, came to meet Peter, (for this was the muleteer's name), and addressed him by the name of father. The supper which she served had no less the appearance of easy circumstances. The room they gave me, though simple, was elegant almost to luxury. Never till then had I so soft a

bed. Before falling asleep, I reflected on what I had seen. 'Can this man,' said I to myself, 'harass and wear out his life in such hard labour, only to spend a few hours of it at his ease? No: he is labouring to secure a quiet and peaceful old age, and the pleasure with which he looks forward to that period, soothes him under his fatigues. But what caprice can have induced this only daughter, whom he tenderly loves, and who is really young and handsome, to put on the dress of a nun. Why this grey-coloured gown, this linen unplaited, this cross of gold on her breast, and nun-like handkerchief on her bosom? Yet the hair which she conceals under a fillet is of a handsome colour. The little that can be seen of her neck is white as ivory. Her arms are of the same pure ivory, and handsomely rounded.' Amid these thoughts I fell asleep; and next day had the pleasure of breakfasting with the fair nun. She obligingly inquired how I had slept. 'Agreeably,' said I, 'but not quietly; I have dreamt a great

deal. But how have you slept, Mademoiselle?'—'Not amiss, thank heaven,' said she.—'Have you dreamt too?'—She blushed, and answered that she very seldom dreamt.—'And when you do dream, it is of angels?'—'Of martyrs sometimes,' said she, smiling.—'Of those doubtless whose martyrdom is on your account?'—'My account! there is no one a martyr on my account.'—'I am certain there is more than one, though you do not choose to boast of it. For my part, when the heavens open to me in my dreams, I scarce ever see any thing but virgins. Some are in white; others in a vest and petticoat of grey cloth, which becomes them better than the richest ornament. No part of this simple attire disguises the natural beauty of their hair and complexion; no fold injures their figure; a gown fitted close to their shape displays and delineates its roundness. A lily arm, and a pretty hand, with its rosy fingers, appear as nature made them, from under a plain

unadorned sleeve; and what the handkerchief conceals, fancy can easily supply. But however agreeable it is to see all these young ladies in heaven, I must own myself a little afflicted by the place that is assigned them.'—'What place is that?' asked she with embarrassment.—'Alas, almost alone in a corner; and what I dislike still more, close to the capuchin fathers.'—'To the capuchin fathers!' exclaimed she, knitting her eyebrow.—'Yes, indeed, left almost desolate: while the respectable matrons, encircled by the children whom they have educated, by the husbands whom they have already made happy on earth, by the relations whom they have comforted, amused and supported in their old age, hold a distinguished station, and shine with glory in the view of all heaven.'—'Well,' asked she, with a satirical look, 'where are the abbés stationed?'—'If there are any,' replied I, 'they will perhaps have stuck them up in some corner at a distance from the virgins.'—'I believe so,' said

she; 'and they will have acted very prudently, for they would be dangerous neighbours.'

This dispute about our professions diverted honest Peter. Never had he seen his daughter so lively and talkative; for I took care, as Montaigne would have said, to throw into my argument, a seasoning (sweet mingled with sour) of half-provoking, half-flattering, gaiety, with which she pretended to be angry, but was in reality very well pleased. At last her father, the evening before we were to set out for Toulouse, took me alone into his room, and said, 'Mr. Abbé, I see clearly that you and my daughter will never agree, unless I interfere. Yet there must be an end of this quarrel about your professions of nun and abbé. This may be easily brought about, if you will only throw away your band, and she her round collar; now I have some suspicion that, if you wish it, the difficulty on her part would not be great. For myself, as for ten years in the course of my

business, I executed the commissions of that honest fellow your father; and as every one tells me, you are just such another, I will deal frankly and cordially with you.' He then opened the drawers of his bureau, and shewed me heaps of crown pieces. 'See,' said he, 'one word may do the business. See what I have collected, and am still collecting for my grandchildren, if my daughter presents me with any; and for your children too, if you give your own consent, and can procure hers.'

I certainly was somewhat tempted by the sight of this treasure. The offer was the more inviting, as honest Peter attached to it no other condition than that of making his daughter happy. 'I will continue,' said he, 'to drive my mules; every journey I make will enlarge this heap of crowns which you are to enjoy. The life I delight in is one of labour and fatigue. I will continue it as long as I have health and strength; and when old age shall bend my back, and stiffen my

limbs, I will come and end my life quietly with you.'—'Ah, my good Peter,' said I, 'who can deserve better than you the repose of a long and happy old age. But how can you think of marrying your daughter to a man who has five children already?'—'You, Sir, at your age, five children!'—'I have indeed. Have I not two sisters and three brothers? who look up to me as their only father. It is my income, and not yours, that ought to support them; it is my duty to labour for their subsistence.'—'Do you think,' said Peter, 'you will make as much by your Latin, as I by my mules.'—'I hope so,' said I; 'at least, I will do every thing in my power.'—'So, then, you won't have my nun; and yet she is handsome, especially now that you have given her more animation.'—'Certainly,' said I, 'she is both handsome and agreeable; she would tempt me more than your crowns. But I repeat it; nature has already thrown five children into my arms. Marriage would soon give me five others; perhaps

more: for devout ladies have commonly a great many: this would be too great a load upon me.'—'I am sorry for it,' said he; 'then my daughter will not marry at all.'—'I think you may be assured,' said I, 'that she feels no longer such an aversion to marriage. I have taught her, that in heaven worthy matrons rank greatly above virgins; and provided you choose a husband she likes, you will find her easily converted to this new kind of devotion.' My prophecy was fulfilled.

As soon as I arrived at Toulouse, I called on Father Noaillac. 'Your affair is far advanced,' said he: 'I found several jesuits here, who know you, and who have joined their votes to mine. Your admission has been proposed and agreed to; you enter, if you please, to-morrow. The provincial expects you.' I was somewhat surprised at his making such haste; but, without complaining, I let myself be conducted to him. I found him accordingly ready to receive me as soon as I thought proper, provided, as he said,

my vocation was sincere and determined. I replied, that, before quitting my mother, I had not courage to declare my resolution to her; but could not proceed farther without asking her advice and consent; I must therefore have time to write and receive her answer.

The answer was not long of arriving; but, O God! what an answer! what language! what eloquence! None of the illusions, with which Father Noaillac had flattered my imagination, made the least impression on my mother's mind She saw nothing but the absolute dependence, the profound devotion, the blind obedience, to which her son would bind himself, the moment he assumed the dress of a jesuit. 'And how,' said she, 'can I believe that you will still be mine? You will no longer be your own. What hope for my children—can I repose on him, whose whole being is every moment at the disposal of a stranger? I am told, nay, assured, that if, by the caprice of your superiors, you are appointed to go

to India, to China, to Japan ; if the head of the society sends you thither, you must not even hesitate ; without reply, and without resistance, you must set out immediately. What ! my son, has God then made you a free being ; has he given you a sound understanding, a good heart, a feeling soul ; has he endowed you with a disposition naturally so upright and just, with those inclinations which constitute the man of virtue, only to reduce you to the state of a passive machine ? Ah ! be persuaded by me ; leave vows, leave inflexible rules to souls which feel themselves in need of restraint. I, who know you well, can confidently assure you, that the more free yours shall be, the more certainly will it prompt to nothing that is not honourable and praiseworthy. O my dear son ! recollect that dreadful moment, the remembrance of which, however agonizing, is yet dear to my memory, that moment, when, amid a family overwhelmed with affliction, God gave you strength to revive its hopes, by

declaring yourself its support. Will you improve, by enslaving it, a heart which nature has rendered capable of such emotions? And when you shall have resigned the power of indulging them, when you shall be no longer master of any part of yourself; what will become of those virtuous resolutions, never to abandon your brothers, your sisters, your mother? You are lost to them; they can have no longer any hope from you. My children, your second father is about to die to the world and to nature. I, a hopeless mother, will weep for him; will weep for you whom he has abandoned. O God! this is what, in my own house, but without my knowledge, you and that perfidious jesuit were planning. He came to deprive a poor widow of her son, and five orphans of their father. Cruel, merciless, man; with what treacherous kindness he flattered me! Such, I am told, is their genius and their character. But you, my son, who never had a secret for me, you also deceived me! He has then

taught you dissimulation; and this has been your first use of his lessons. Your noble and generous motive for rejecting the aid of a bishop, was only an idle pretence to divert me from my wishes, and to disguise your own. No; you cannot be the real author of all this. I would rather believe that some phantom has deluded your senses. I will not cease to esteem and to love my son; these sentiments are dearer to me than life itself. My son has been intoxicated with ambitious hopes. He thought he was sacrificing himself for me and for my children. His young mind was weak, but his heart will always be good. He will not read this letter, bathed in his mother's tears, without detesting the perfidious counsel which has led him for a moment astray.'

Yes, my mother was indeed in the right. I could not finish the perusal of this letter, without being nearly suffocated by tears and sobs. From that moment, all idea of becoming a jesuit was banished from my mind; and I made

haste to inform the provincial of this resolution. He did not disapprove my respect for maternal authority; but was pleased to express some regret on my own account; and said that, in consideration of my good intentions, the society would always regard me with a favourable eye. Accordingly, I found the masters of this school, like those at Clermont, well disposed to give me scholars of every class. But my ambition now was to teach a philosophical school; and I busied myself in the attainment of this object.

My age was always the first obstacle to my views. Having begun my graduation by the study of philosophy, I thought myself at least capable of teaching its elements; but scarce any of my scholars was younger than myself. In this great difficulty, I consulted an old tutor, of the name of Morin, the most distinguished in that capacity of any in the colleges. He conversed with me a long time, and judged me sufficiently qualified. But how

could grown-up men be expected to come to my class. Yet an idea struck him, and drew his attention. 'It would be exceedingly good,' said he, laughing to himself. 'Well, no matter, I shall make the attempt; perhaps it may succeed.' I was curious to know what this idea might be. 'The Bernardines,' said he, 'have in this place a kind of seminary, to which they send their young people from all quarters to complete their studies. The professor of philosophy has been taken ill, and they have asked me to supply his place in the meantime. As my other engagements do not admit of my performing this office, they wish me to recommend one; I will propose you.'

I was accepted on his recommendation. But, when he introduced me next day, I saw clearly the ridiculous effect of the contrast between my age and my functions. Almost the whole school had a beard, except the master. Perceiving a smile, somewhat mixed with disdain, to which my presence gave rise, I

met it with a cool and modest, but dignified air; and while Morin was talking with the superiors, I inquired of the young people what were the regulations of their house concerning the period of study, and the hour of meeting. I pointed out some books with which they should supply themselves, in order that their private and public studies might correspond. I took care that my manner of addressing them should be neither too youthful nor too familiar; so that towards the end of the conversation, I found them regarding me with a serious attention, instead of the light tone and jeering air which they had assumed at the beginning.

The result of the conference, which Morin held with the superiors, was, that next morning, I should deliver my first lecture.

I was provoked, by the insulting smile, with which I had been met, on my first introduction, to these monks. I was eager to revenge it, and contrived to do

so, in the following manner:—It is customary, on the opening of a course of philosophical lectures, to dictate a kind of preliminary discourse, which forms, as it were, the porch of that temple, to which the disciples of wisdom are introduced; it ought, therefore, to combine some degree of dignity and elegance. I bestowed great pains on this piece of composition. I got it by heart. In the same manner I composed, and got by heart an outline of the subjects of which I was to treat. Full of my plan, I then gravely and proudly ascended the professor's chair. The young Bernardines seated themselves round me, while their superiors, impatient to hear me, stood leaning on the back of their seats. I inquired, if they are ready to write what I should dictate. They answered, 'Yes.' Then, crossing my arms, without any paper before me, as if speaking extempore, I dictated first my introduction, and then the division of my course of philosophy, pointing out, as I went on, the principal

roads, and the chief points of elevation.

I cannot recollect, without laughing, the amazed look of the Bernardines, and the profound respect with which I was received by them on coming down from the chair. I had succeeded too well in this first attempt, not to continue and support the character I had assumed. Every day, therefore, I studied the lecture I was to deliver, and, though dictating from memory, appeared only to pronounce what I composed on the spot. Some time after, when Morin called on them, they talked of me with the same astonishment, as if I had been a prodigy. They shewed him the notes that had been taken of my lectures; and, when he was pleased to express to me his surprise, that such composition should be dictated extempore, I answered, in the words of Horace,—'That to a man who had clear ideas, and was master of his subject, words came spontaneously.'

Thus, among Gascons, I began by a

gasconade; but there was a necessity for it; and the consequence was, that when the Bernardine professor came to take his place, Morin, who had the offer of more scholars than he could attend to, gave me as many as I chose. In another quarter, too, fortune was propitious beyond expectation.

There was an institution at Toulouse, called the college of S^t. Catharine, founded for students from the province of Limosin. Those, who were received into it, had lodging free, and received, besides, 200 livres *per annum*, during the five years of graduation. When a vacancy occurred, the incumbents filled it up by ballot, which was certainly a good and wise regulation. On one of these occasions, my young countrymen were attentive enough to think of me. In this college, where liberty was unrestrained, provided it did not transgress the bounds, every one lived as he chose. The porter and cook were paid at our common expence. Thus, by

means of economy, I was able to transmit to my family the greater part of what my industry produced; and this remittance increasing every year, as my school became more numerous, was at length almost sufficient to place them in easy circumstances. But, while Fortune thus favoured me with the sweetest enjoyments, Nature was preparing the most heart-rending affliction.

Yet I had still some interval of prosperity. Turning accidentally over a collection of pieces, crowned by the Academy of Floral Games, I was struck by the splendid prizes, consisting of gold and silver flowers, which that academy distributed. I was not quite so much dazzled by the beauty of the pieces, which had obtained these prizes. It appeared to me easy enough to make something better. I thought of the pleasure of sending my mother these nosegays of gold and silver, and how happy it would make her to receive them from me. From this moment, I was seized with the wish and

design of becoming a poet. But I had not studied the rules of our poetry. I instantly went, therefore, and got a little book, which taught these rules; and, by the advice of the bookseller, I, at the same time, purchased a copy of the odes of Rousseau. I perused and dwelt on them both, and presently began to ransack my brain, in search of some good subject for an ode. I fixed upon the invention of *Gunpowder*. I remember it began thus:

Toi qu'une infernale Eumenide
*Petrit de ses sanglantes mains.**

I was lost in astonishment at having composed so beautiful an ode. Intoxicated with the most enthusiastic self-love, I sent it to the academy, without the least doubt of its gaining the prize. It did not gain it, nor had I even the consolation of obtaining the second prize. I was enraged;

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* Thee whom an infernal Fury fashioned with her bloody hands.

and, prompted by indignation, I wrote to Voltaire, and sent him my work, calling for vengeance. It is well known how kindly Voltaire used to treat young men, who discovered any talent for poetry. The French Parnassus was, as it were, an empire, whose sceptre he would not have yielded to any man living, but whose subjects he delighted to see multiplying. He sent me one of those answers of which he was so liberal, and which he wrote so gracefully. The praises he bestowed on my work afforded ample consolation for what I called the injustice of the academy, whose judgment, against that of Voltaire, I conceived did not weigh a grain in the balance. But there was another attention, which flattered me still more than his letter, and that was, his presenting me with a copy of his works corrected by his own hand. I was intoxicated with pride and delight, and ran over the city and colleges, shewing every one this present. Such was the beginning of my correspondence with thi illustrious man, and

of that friendly and unalterable union; which, for the thirty-five years of his remaining life, continued to subsist between us. I continued to compose for the Academy of Floral Games, and gained prizes every year. But the last of these little literary triumphs was rendered interesting to me, by a motive more rational and impressive than that of vanity. The scene deserves a place in the memoirs which I transmit to my children.

As men estimate every object only by comparison, the good people at Toulouse had no idea of any literary success more brilliant than that which was obtained at the Academy of Floral Games. The public assembly therefore, held by this academy for the distribution of prizes, had all the splendour and crowded attendance usual at a great solemnity. Three deputies, from the Parliament, presided; the chief magistrates and the whole corporation of the city were present in their robes; the hall, in the form of an amphitheatre, was filled with all the men of fa-

shion, and fine women, in the city; the young students of the university filled the pit, around the academic circle; the hall was very extensive, and adorned with festoons of flowers and laurel; while, the moment a prize was decreed, the trumpets made the city echo with the triumphant sound of victory.

I had, this year, offered five pieces to the academy; an ode, two poems, and two idyls. The ode failed of the prize; it was not given at all. The two poems were equally successful; one received the prize of epic poetry; the other received one for prose composition, which happened to be vacant. One of the two idyls obtained the first prize of pastoral poetry; the other obtained the second Thus, the only three prizes, which the academy was to distribute, were assigned to me. I went to the assembly with transports of vanity, which I never could recollect since without confusion, and without pitying the follies of my youth. The affair was still worse, when I was

loaded with my flowers and my crowns. But where is the poet, who, at twenty years old, would not have had his head turned by such an event?

Silence was imposed throughout the hall; then followed the never-failing panegyric upon *Clemence Isaure*, the lady who founded the floral games, which is pronounced every year at the foot of her statue; after that came the distribution of the prizes. We were first informed that the prize for the ode was withheld; (now, it was known that I had offered an ode to the academy, and also that I was the author of an idyl, which had not been crowned); they pitied me, and I readily allowed them to do so. Then the poem, which had gained the prize, was named aloud; and, on hearing these words, 'Let the author come forward,' I rose, I approached and received the prize. The usual applauses followed; and those about me began to say, 'He has missed two, but not the third; he has more than one string to his bow.' I returned modestly to my

seat, amid the sound of trumpets. But soon the second poem was named, on which the academy, we were told, had thought fit to bestow the prize of eloquence, rather than to withhold it altogether. The author was called upon, and I again rose; the applauses redoubled, and this poem was listened to with the same favour and complacency as the first. I had returned to my place, when the idyl was proclaimed, and the author invited to come for his prize. The assembly see me rise for the third time; then, if I had composed Cinna, Athalia, and Zara, the applause could not have been louder. Their minds were raised to the highest enthusiasm. The men carried me through the crowd in their arms; the women kissed me. O Glory! this indeed teaches me that thou art but an empty shadow. Forty years after, I read over these essays, then thought so brilliant, and, though disposed to view them with indulgence, I did not find one which appeared to deserve a place in the collec-

tion of my works. But, on this day so flattering for me, there occurred one circumstance, which, as it still sensibly affects me, I will now relate.

Amid the tumult and noise of an admiring people, two long arms were opened and extended towards me. I turned, and saw my master in the third class, the worthy father Malosse, whom I had not met for more than eight years. I rushed forward, forced my way through the crowd, and, throwing myself into his arms, held out my three prizes. 'They are yours, father,' said I, 'it is to you that I owe them.' The eyes of the worthy Jesuit were filled with tears, as he raised them to heaven; and the pleasure, which he thus felt, afforded me a more sensible satisfaction than even the splendour of my triumph. Ah! my children, that which interests the heart and the soul is always sweet; it affords pleasure through the whole course of life. The vanity of being admired for wit and talents, is re-

membered only like a vain dream, whose delusions we blush at having too fondly cherished.

These literary amusements, though very attractive, did not at all encroach on my serious employments. I spent my walks and leisure hours in composing verses, but, at the same time, steadily attended to my studies, and those of my class. Having in vain endeavoured, during my second year of philosophy, to prevail on the Jesuit professor to teach us the Newtonian system, I resolved to go and study it under the *Doctrinaires*. Their college, called *l'Esquille*, had two philosophical professors, who were both men of merit; but one of these, with whom I studied, was indeed intelligent and well informed; yet, either from character, or from weakness of constitution, he was too much inclined to indolence and repose. He found it convenient to have a pupil, who, having already studied philosophy, could occasionally relieve

him from the fatigue of teaching his class.

'Come up to the chair,' said he, 'and explain to them what you yourself understand so readily. This panegyric was a full compensation for the trouble I took; for it procured me the confidence of the scholars, and made them wish to have me for their private tutor, which afforded a sure and excellent source of emolument.

Out of complaisance to the professor, I was obliged, though rather unwillingly, to maintain general disputations. He was very anxious to have me among those of his scholars who were to make a public appearance, and, being member of the Academy of Sciences at Toulouse, he wished my thesis to be dedicated to this academy. A thesis, pronounced in their presence, would form, he said, a very new and striking spectacle. He wished thus to close his philosophical career, and resolved to increase the pomp of this spectacle, by a step, which might be at

once honourable and surprising to me. He succeeded but too well; and my surprise was such, that it had nearly rendered me an idiot or madman for life.

In these public exercises, it was a constant practice for the professor to be in his chair, and his scholar before him, upon a desk, immediately below the chair. When all the company were seated, and the illustrious academy placed before the chair, I was informed, and made my appearance. You may well suppose, that I had prepared a compliment to the academy, and that all the moderate degree of skill and ability, which I possessed, had been employed in this little harangue. I knew it by heart, had repeated it twenty times without the least hesitation, and thought myself so sure of remembering it, that I had neglected to bring the manuscript. Well, I appeared; but instead of finding the professor in his chair, I saw him sitting among the other academicians. I made him a respectful sign to come to his place. 'Go up, sir,' said he aloud,

with a calm and indolent air, 'go up, either to the desk or the chair, as you please. You have no need of my assistance.' This magnificent testimony in my favour excited, in the assembly, a murmur of surprise, and, I believe, of approbation; but, upon me, it had the effect of freezing my senses, and disordering my brain. Trembling with astonishment, I mounted the steps of the desk, and, as usual, threw myself on my knees, as if to implore the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Before rising, however, I endeavoured to recal the words with which my compliment was to begin. I had no recollection of them. The end of the thread was lost. In vain did I search for it through my brain; nothing appeared but an impenetrable mist. Inconceivable were the efforts I made to find at least the first word of my discourse. Not a word, not an idea came. I continued several minutes in this agonizing condition, covered with a cold sweat, and having the veins and nerves of my head almost

burst by this laborious and terrible struggle. Yet, on a sudden, as if by miracle, the cloud, in which my mind was involved, dispersed, my ideas rose anew. Though exceedingly fatigued, I was now free from anxiety, and, having got hold of the thread of my discourse, I delivered it. I shall not speak of the success which it met with. Praise seldom meets with a bad reception; and I had seasoned this as well as I could. Neither shall I boast of the favour which supported me through the whole of this exercise. Such of the academicians as deigned to enter the lists with me, while they introduced the most important questions in physical science, studiously afforded me an opportunity of making brilliant answers. They acted like true patrons of literature, full of kindness and indulgence. But the circumstance, which struck and affected me most, was the generous conduct of the Jesuit professor, whom I had quitted too rashly, for the purpose of removing to l'Esquille. My answers were

fortunately such as gave him to understand, that I perceived his mode of arguing to be that of a master, who calls forth the strength of his pupil, without wishing to overwhelm him. When I came down from the desk, the president of the academy congratulated me, and said, that that learned body could not better express its satisfaction than by offering me a place among its members, which happened to be then vacant. I accepted it with humble acknowledgments, and, amid public applauses, received the reward of my disputation.

But the solid advantage, which I derived from this youthful success, consisted in the additional number of scholars whom it attracted to my school, which enabled me to transmit more assistance to Bort. The wealth which I derived from my industry was now such as enabled me to educate my second brother. I invited him to Toulouse. He was fourteen years old, and did not know a word of Latin; but his conception was

very clear, his memory excellent, and he was eagerly desirous to profit by my instructions. I simplified the rules, and shortened the method of study, so that, in six months, he was complete master of syntax; and after having been very busy for a year, he was able to go on without a master. This he was most ambitious to do, for he saw me overwhelmed with labour, and regarded all the trouble that he could save me, as if it had been a relief to himself. Poor fellow! the attachment he felt for me was not friendship only, it was adoration. The name of brother, in his mouth, had a sacred character. He expressed a desire to enter into the church, with which I was very well satisfied; for my own desire of following this profession was cooled by different causes, particularly by the thorny and revolting difficulties which were attempted to be thrown in my way.

The inspector and spiritual superintendant of the college of S^{t}. Catharine, in which I had a place, was one Goute-

longue, a proctor of the archbishop, a bold and intriguing fellow, who was even said to be a little of a knave. His object was to manage the college according to his own inclination, and to fill up the vacant places with whoever he thought fit. By his situation as proctor, by the authority of the archbishop, which he was always talking of, and by the credit which he boasted of having with his lordship, he had intimidated some, and gained others, so as to form among our companions, a party whom fear and hope rendered his creatures. But there was, in the college, one Pujalou, a young man of a frank, independent, and determined, character, who, wearied of his tyranny, dared to make head against him, and to raise the standard of rebellion against this usurped authority. 'What right,' said he, to his young Limosin companions, 'has this man to form intrigues in our assemblies, and to embarrass our elections? The founder of this college, when he allowed us the

privilege of electing to the vacant places, wisely judged, that youth was the age when the heart is naturally most candid, just, and upright. Why then shall we allow him to corrupt this equitable sentiment, by which we are animated. With us, the vacant scholarships are bestowed on those who are most worthy, not on those who have the highest interest. If Goutelongue will have creatures, let him gain them by the favours of his archbishop, but let him not gratify them at our expence. Our choice ought to be guided by our own conscience, which is at least as sound as that of the proctor. But I know him, and declare myself to have less faith in his honesty, than in that of a horse jockey.' This last stroke, though not in the highest style of eloquence, was that which carried the day. The proctor kept, ever after, his title of jockey, and his intrigues in the college were likened to the dealings of that craft.

Such was the state of things at my ar-

rival, and Pujalon found no difficulty in gaining me to his party. From that moment, I was marked down in the proctor's tablets, where an achievement of my own soon procured me a more distinguished place. A scholarship happened to fall vacant. The two parties were exactly balanced, and, in case of a division, the archbishop would have determined the election. We counted our numbers, and found ourselves sure of carrying, though only by a single vote. Now, on the evening before the election, we lost this vote. One of our companions, a well-meaning, but very timid young man, suddenly disappeared; and we learned that an uncle of his, who was curate in a village at three leagues distance, had come and carried him off to spend the Christmas vacation. We had no doubt that this was a stratagem of Goutelongue. The village, and the road to it, were well known; but it was dark; rain was falling, mixed with snow and hail, and it seemed absurd to suppose, that the curate

would allow his nephew to set out in such a night, particularly when he had himself carried him away out of regard to the proctor. 'Well,' said I, on a sudden, 'no matter; I engage to get hold of him, and bring him along with me. Give me a good horse.' I had one instantly, and, muffled up in Pujalou's long cloak, arrived, in two hours, at the door of the parsonage house. The curate, his nephew, and his servant, were just going to bed. My companion, when he saw me dismount, came to meet me. I saluted him, saying, 'Be courageous, or you are disgraced for ever.' The curate, to whom I introduced myself as belonging to the college of S^t. Catharine, asked what was my business. 'I come,' said I, 'in the name of Jesus Christ, the common father of the poor. I conjure you not to become an accomplice of their enemy, of that unjust and cruel man, who deprives them of their substance, and squanders it for his own pleasure.' I then disclosed to him the intrigues of Goute-

longue, by which he sought to usurp the right of supplying vacancies and bestowing them on his own creatures. 'To-morrow,' said I, 'we are to elect either a scholar whom he patronizes, and who has no occasion for the vacant place, or a poor fellow who deserves and expects it. On which of the two do you wish the appointment to fall?' He replied, that, if the choice depended upon him, it should not be long doubtful. 'Well,' said I, 'it does depend on you. The poor boy wants one vote only; of this vote he thought himself assured, but, in compliance with the urgent solicitations of Goutelongue, you have taken it from him: Restore it; restore him the bread you have snatched out of his mouth.' Amazed, and thunderstruck, he replied, that his nephew was his own master; that he had only brought him there to spend the holidays, but had not forced him. 'If,' replied I, 'he is his own master, let him come along with me; let him fulfil his duty; let him redeem his honour: for

it is gone, if he is believed to have sold himself to Goutelongue.' Then, turning to the young man, and seeing him inclined to follow me, 'Come,' said I, 'take leave of your uncle, and let the college see that neither of you is the slave of the proctor.' Instantly we are both on the road, and soon lose sight of the village.

Our companions had not gone to bed; we found them at table. Judge of the transports of joy with which they saw us arrive together. I thought Pujalou would have stifled me with embraces. We were drenched to the skin. Their first care was to dry us, and then to give us as much ham, sausage, and wine, as we could eat or drink. In the middle of these raptures, however, I had the prudence to propose, that the opposite party should be left ignorant of the occasion of our joy, till the hour of meeting; and, accordingly, the sudden appearance of the deserter gave our adversaries a most overwhelming surprise. We carried the vacant place,

as it were, sword in hand; but Goutelongue learned the reason, and never forgave me.

When I went therefore to request that the archbishop would be so good as procure me what is called a *demissoire*, that I might take orders from him, his mind appeared to be strongly prejudiced against me. 'I was just a gay abbé, quite taken up with poetry, paying my court to the ladies, and writing pastorals and songs for them; nay, sometimes, at dusk, I went to the public walks and took the air with pretty girls.' This archbishop was La Roche-Aymond, a man not at all scrupulous about the morality of actions, which could serve any political purpose; but he affected great strictness against sins of which he himself was innocent, and wished me to do penance for them in the most dirty and bigotted of all our seminaries. I recognized the friendly offices of Goutelongue, and my disgust for the seminary of Calvet shewed me, what had hitherto been a secret to my-

self, that my inclination for the church was cooled.

My connection with Voltaire, to whom I sometimes wrote, inclosing copies of my poetical attempts, and who was so good as answer me, contributed not a little to alienate my mind from this profession.

Voltaire, holding out to me the hope of success in a poetical career, urged me to go to Paris, as the only school where a taste and capacity for that art could be formed. I answered, that Paris was too great a scene for me; that I should be lost in the crowd; that, besides, having inherited no property, I should have no means of subsistence; whereas, at Toulouse, I had established myself in a respectable and comfortable livelihood. Unless, therefore, I had the certainty of nearly an equal income at Paris, I would have fortitude sufficient to resist the desire of paying homage to the great man who invited me thither.

Meanwhile, I must determine upon

something. Literature at Paris, the bar at Toulouse, or the seminary at Limoges, were my three prospects, and they appeared to be all distant and uncertain. In this state of irresolution, I was desirous of consulting my mother. I knew her to be in a languid state, but I did not suppose her seriously ill; and hoping that the sight of me might restore her to health, I went to see her. What charms, what pleasures would this journey have yielded me, had its effect corresponded to so dear a hope.

Having left my brother at Toulouse, and set out on a little horse which had bought, I arrived at the hamlet of S^t^. Thomas, where our farm was situated. It was a holiday. My eldest sister, with the daughter of my aunt d'Albois, had come there to take a walk. I rested and dressed myself; for I carried, in a portmanteau behind me, the whole attire of an abbé. In order to reach Bort from S^t^. Thomas, we had only to ford the river and cross a meadow. I made the two little girls pass

the river on my horse, and then went over it in the same way myself. Forgive these minute particulars; remember I am writing to my children.

Vespers were saying in church as I passed by, and a little farther on I was met by Odde, one of my school-fellows, who has since married my sister. He spread through the church the news of my arrival; immediately upon which my friends, neighbours, and, in short, the whole assembly, stole out one after another. The church was left empty, and the house was soon filled and surrounded by the crowd of those who were coming to see me. Alas! I was then in the deepest affliction! I had just seen my mother; and her thinness, her cough, the burning red which coloured her cheek, appeared to me symptoms of the same illness which had proved fatal to my father. It was but too true.—My mother, though not yet forty, was attacked by it. This fatal consumption was contagious in our family, in which it has made cruel

ravages. I struggled as much as possible to conceal from my mother the grief with which I was seized. She was aware of her danger, but forgot, or at least appeared to forget, it; and, at our meeting, spoke only of her joy. She insisted, as I have since learned, that the physician and my aunts should flatter and relieve me from all anxiety about her situation. They all joined with her in deceiving me, and my mind clung eagerly to the pleasing delusion of hope.

I return to our villagers. The delight which my mother felt, at my academical success, had been communicated to all around her. The silver flowers, which I sent, and with which she annually adorned the altar on the Fête Dieu, had made the village form a most astonishing idea of me. These people, whose character perhaps, like that of many others, may since have been perverted, were then goodness itself. They vied with each other in loading me with every possible mark of friendship. The good women

delighted in telling stories of my childhood: the men listened to me, as if every word had been an oracle. Yet my expressions were only those of simple feeling, such as were dictated by the emotion of my heart. As every one came congratulating my mother, Mademoiselle B** came also with her sisters; and custom required that she should allow the new comer to embrace her: but, while the others cordially returned the innocent kiss I gave them, she shunned it, by gently withdrawing her cheek. I felt this difference, and was deeply affected by it.

During the three weeks that I passed with my mother, it was impossible not to steal a few short intervals from natural affection, and bestow them on grateful friendship. My mother required it; and rather than deprive our friends of the pleasure of seeing me, she went herself to the little entertainments that were given on the occasion. These were dinners, to which the inhabitants mutually invited

each other. There my mother was continually interested, and continually affected, by what people said to her son, and by what her son answered; she watched my very looks, and was perpetually anxious about the manner in which I was to return the attentions, with which they were all besieging me. These long dinners, therefore, cost her mind a laborious effort, which was too much for an enfeebled frame. Our private conversations, being more interesting, fatigued her still more. In order to save her as much as possible from the fatigue of speaking, I either told long stories, or studiously cut short the dialogue with my reflections. But listening to me animated her as much as talking herself, and was no less hurtful to her health. I could not, without the most grievous distress, see, sparkling in her eyes, that fire, which was consuming her blood.

At last, I told her how much my ardour for the profession of the church had cooled, and how irresolute I was with re-

spect to the choice of another. Then, indeed, she appeared calm, and spoke to me with coolness.

'The profession of the church,' said she, 'imposes two essential duties; those of piety and chastity; it is impossible otherwise to be a good priest. Now, you must examine yourself upon these two points. As to the bar, if you follow that profession, I require your most sacred promise, that you will never assert a fact, which you do not believe to be true; nor defend a cause, which you do not believe to be just. As to the other path, into which M. de Voltaire invites you to enter, it appears to me a wise precaution to secure a situation at Paris, where you may have leisure to acquire information and improve your talents; for, do not deceive yourself, what you have done hitherto is very little. If M. de Voltaire can procure for you this honourable, free, and secure, situation, go, my son, enter the lists of fame and fortune. I willingly

consent; but never forget, that virtue is the most suitable and honourable companion of genius.' Thus spoke this wonderful woman, who had received no other education but that of a convent at Bort.

Her medical attendant thought it his duty to warn me, that my presence was hurtful to her. 'Her illness,' said he, 'arises from the blood being too much inflamed; my great object is to cool it, while you, however unwillingly, cannot avoid increasing its agitation. Every evening, therefore, I find her pulse quicker and higher. Sir, if you wish her health to be restored, you must go away. But take particular care that she be not too much affected by your parting.' I bade her this cruel farewel; and my mother then shewed a courage superior to mine; for she had no longer any hope, while there was still a shadow of it in my mind. The moment I spoke of the necessity of returning to my pupils, she said, 'Yes, my son, you must go. We have met, and opened our hearts to each other; we have now only to

take a tender farewel; for I need not exhort you—' She stopped, and her eyes filled with tears. 'I am thinking,' said she, 'of the worthy mother whom I have lost, and who was so fond of you. She died like a saint. How happy would she have been to see you once again! But I must endeavour to die in the same pious frame of mind. We shall meet again in the presence of God.' Then, changing the subject, she spoke of Voltaire. I had sent her the handsome present he made me of a corrected copy of his works. She had read them over, and still continued to read them. 'If you see him,' said she, 'thank him for the agreeable moments he has made your mother spend. Tell him that she could repeat, by heart, the second act of Zara; that she bedewed Merope with her tears; and that these beautiful lines of the Henriade, upon Hope, were continually present to her memory and her heart.

'*Mais aux mortels chéris à qui le ciel l'envoie,*
Elle n'inspire point une infidele joie;

Elle apporte de Dieu la promesse et l'appui,
Elle est inebranlable et pure comme lui.' *

My very soul was rent, by hearing her thus talk of herself, as of one who would soon be no more. But, as I had been exhorted to shun carefully whatever could affect her too much, I took no notice of this foreboding. Next day, hiding from each other the grief of separation, we took leave as calmly as nature would allow.

As soon as I left her, I sunk into the deepest dejection; and all the reflections which arose, during my journey, were of the same overwhelming nature. Soon, then, said I, I shall no longer have my mother, the adored mother, who, since my birth, has breathed only for me; whose displeasure I dreaded like that of

* 'But those favoured mortals to whom heaven sends her, are inspired by her with no treacherous joy. She brings from heaven assurance and support; she is, like heaven itself, pure and unalterable.'

God; nay, if I may dare to say it, more than that of God himself; for I thought of her much oftener; and when I had any temptation to overcome, it was my mother always whose presence restrained me. What would she say, if she knew my thoughts? what shame, what grief, would she feel? With these reflections, I opposed my irregular inclination, and then reason resumed her empire, seconded as she was by nature, which reigned supreme over my heart. To those who, like me, have experienced this tender filial affection, I need not describe my sadness and dejection. Yet, I still had a ray of hope, which, though faint, was too dear to me not to be cherished to the last moment.

I went then to complete my studies; and, having entered into the school of canon law, so as to leave myself the option of both professions my final determination would probably have been for the bar. But, about the end of the year, a short note from Voltaire, determined me to set out for Paris. 'Come,' said he, 'there is no fear

of you; I have spoken to M. Orri, who undertakes to provide for you.' Who might this M. Orri be? I knew not, but went to ask my good friends at Toulouse, and shewed them my note. 'M. Orri!' exclaimed they, 'mercy on us! he is comptroller-general of finance. Ah! my dear fellow, your fortune is made; you will be a farmer-general. Remember us in your glory. When the minister has once undertaken to patronize you, you will easily gain his esteem, his confidence, and his friendship. Dear Marmontel, now that you are at the fountain of court favour, do turn a few rivulets our way. Our ambition would be satisfied with a little streamlet from Pactolus.' One of them would have chosen to be receiver-general, another was satisfied with a more private appointment, such as might yield him two or three thousand crowns a year; all this was in my power.

I forgot to mention, that I and some of my friends had formed ourselves into a literary society, meant as a rival to the

Academy of Floral Games; and which had already acquired some celebrity under the name of *The Little Academy.* Its members vied with each other in raising my hopes. I was most eager to set out: but as my future opulence did not supersede the necessity of present economy, I was looking about for the cheapest mode of travelling, when M. de Puget, a president of the parliament, asked me to call upon him; and proposed, in an obliging manner, that his son and I should go to Paris in a *litiere* at our common expence. I answered, that though the litiere appeared to me a slow and tiresome mode of travelling, yet the advantage of being in good company would make up for that disadvantage; but that, as to the expence of the journey, my account was fixed; by the courier it would cost me just forty crowns,† and I was determined not to exceed that sum. The president in vain attempted to extract something

† Five pounds.

more from me; and, as he must otherwise have paid the whole litiere, my little contribution was clear gain to him.

I left my brother at Toulouse; and my place in the college of S^{t}. Catharine would have been fully secured to him, if he had been in the philosophical class. But there was no admission to it till after five years attendance, so that there was a necessity, for the present, of relinquishing this advantage; and I settled my brother in the Irish seminary. I advanced a year of his board, and, at parting, left him all that remained of my money, so that I set out from Toulouse with just a crown in my pocket. But a new supply waited me at Montauban.

Montauban, as well as Toulouse, had a literary academy, which gave an annual prize. This prize I had gained, but had not yet received it. It was a silver lyre worth three hundred livres.† On my arrival, I went to receive this lyre, which I

† About twelve guineas.

immediately sold. From this sum, after advancing to the muleteer the expences of my journey, and giving a good entertainment to my friends, a crowd of whom had followed me as far as Montauban, I had still above fifty crowns remaining. It was more than enough for a man who was to make his fortune whenever he arrived at Paris. Never did any one, with such expectations, travel so slowly to meet them. Yet this journey was not so tiresome as I expected. I was always fortunate in my muleteers. Our present one gave excellent entertainment; nor did I ever eat better partridges, turkeys, and truffles. I was ashamed to live so well for forty crowns, and resolved to make a present to this honest fellow, as soon as my situation should admit of my indulging a liberal disposition.

My travelling companion indeed paid better, and accordingly he wished to take advantage of that circumstance; but this he found me not at all disposed to admit of. The first day, I let him take the seat

behind, and, though sick with the jolting of the carriage, and the being driven backward, I quietly suffered these inconveniencies; I did not even express how tired I was of hearing this silliest of spoiled children tell long stories of his noble descent, his large fortune, and the high office of president, with which his father was invested; I let him boast of the beauty of his large blue eyes, and his charming figure, which, he said, with great simplicity, had made all the women in love with him; he told me how they ogled and caressed him, and kissed his fine eyes. I listened patiently, only saying to myself, 'What a ridiculous thing is vanity.'

Next day, I saw him enter the carriage first, and take the seat behind. 'All in good time, my lord marquis,' said I, 'the front if you please.' He answered, that he was in his own place; and that his father had understood he was to have the place behind. I answered, that if his father had tacitly understood so in making his

bargain, I, in making mine, had understood quite otherwise; that, had he proposed it, I would not have cooped myself up, like a fool in this jolting box, while, on horseback, I might, at the same price, have enjoyed the open air, and a view of the country; that I had been fool enough already, in spending my forty crowns to so little purpose; nor would I increase my folly, by giving him always the good seat. He still attempted to keep it; but, though he was as tall as myself, I begged him not to oblige me to drag him out by force. He understood this argument, and took the other seat, but was in very bad humour the whole forenoon. However, he was satisfied with depriving me of his conversation; but, at dinner, his sense of superiority again began to shew itself. A partridge was brought to table. He valued himself upon carving well:

Quo gestu lepores, et quo gallina secetur.

This, indeed, was an art which he had been carefully taught. He took the

bird therefore on his plate, cut off very expertly the two legs and the two wings, kept the two wings for himself, and left me the legs and body. 'You appear,' said I, 'to like the wing of a partridge.' —'Yes,' said he, 'I do.'—'Well, so do I;' and then, laughing, and without the least anger, I put things on an equal footing. 'You are a bold man,' said he, 'to take a wing off my plate.'—'You shewed yourself much more so,' said I, 'when you took two to yourself.' His face was red with anger; but he grew moderate, and we dined quietly. The rest of the day he shrunk into a dignified silence; and as at supper we had the wing of a turkey, of which I gave him the best part, there was no dispute.

The next day I said, 'Now, it is your turn to take the back of the carriage.' He took it, saying, 'You are very good indeed;' and our ride was likely to be as silent as the evening before, when an accident occurred which gave it animation. The marquis took snuff, and so did I;

thanks to a young and handsome girl who had given me this taste. He opened, pouting, his beautiful snuff-box, while I, without any pouting, held out my hand and took a pinch, as if we had been the best friends in the world. He allowed me to take it, and, after thinking a few minutes, said, 'Well, I must tell you a story, which happened to M. de Maniban, first president in the parliament of Toulouse.' I saw that he was going to say something impertinent; however, I listened. 'M. de Maniban,' continued he, 'was giving audience, in his closet, to a *quiz*, who was carrying on a law-suit, and came to solicit his interest. The magistrate, as he listened, opened his snuff-box; the *quiz* took a pinch out of it; the first president shewed no displeasure; but ringing for his servants, and throwing away the snuff, which the *quiz* had touched, he ordered the box to be filled anew.' I took no notice of the application of the parable, but, some time after, my coxcomb having produced his

box, I took snuff as easily as at first. Seeing him surprised, I said, smiling, 'Well, my lord marquis, ring—There is no bell.—It is well for you there is not; for, had you rung, the *quiz* would have given you a sound drubbing.' You may suppose how much he was stunned by my reply. He seemed disposed to be angry, but I was now in a passion myself. 'Keep quiet,' said I, 'or I will cut off your ears. It appears that I have got a young fool to correct, and, from this moment, I declare that I will not put up with a single impertinence. Consider we are going to a city, where the son of a provincial president is nobody; and henceforth begin if possible, to behave in a polite and modest manner; for self-sufficiency, conceit, and foolish pride, will, on your entrance into the world, bring you into much more disagreeable situations.' During this speech, he covered his eyes with his hands, and wept. I took pity upon him, and assumed the tone of a real friend. I expostulated with him upon

his ridiculous boasting, his childish vanity, his silly pretensions; and thought I saw his brain gradually relieved of the vapours with which it had been puffed up. 'After all,' said he, 'what would you have me do? This is the style in which I have been educated.' Among other marks of kindness, I almost always yielded the seat behind, being more accustomed than he to the inconvenience of being driven backwards. This complaisance thoroughly reconciled us; but, as our conversations were interrupted by long intervals of silence, I had time to translate, into verse, the poem of *The Rape of the Lock*, an amusement, the fruits of which were soon of great advantage to me.

My reveries were also supplied with two copious sources of agreeable illusion. One was the idea of the fortune I was to make, and the hope, if Heaven should spare my mother, that she could come and live with me at Paris; the other was the fanciful and magnificent picture which I had drawn of that capital, where even the

least splendid parts must, I thought, possess an elegant and noble simplicity. One of these illusions was destroyed on my first entrance into Paris; the other not long after. On my arrival, I took up my lodging at the Julian baths, and went, next morning, to the levee of Voltaire.

BOOK III.

My young readers, on whom Nature has bestowed any genius and love for the arts, must remember the emotion they felt on being introduced to men, who had acquired celebrity in the pursuit which formed their own study and delight. To them, I need not describe the agitation, the wonder, the kind of religious awe, which I experienced on approaching Voltaire.

Expecting that it would fall to my part to speak first, I had turned, in twenty different ways, the words with which I should first address him, but nothing had satisfied me. He relieved me from this embarrassment. As soon as he heard my name, he came, and, holding out his arms, said, 'My friend, I am very glad to see you; yet I have bad news to tell you; M. Orri had undertaken to provide for you; he is in disgrace.'

It was impossible to fall from a greater height, or in a manner more sudden and unforeseen; yet I was not stunned. Considering the natural weakness of my soul, I have been always astonished at the courage which I have exerted on great occasions. 'Well, sir,' said I, 'I must continue to struggle with adversity; I have long known, and been in the habit of contending with it.'—'I am glad,' said he, 'to see you thus confident of your own powers. Yes, my friend, the best and highest resource of a man of letters is in himself, and in his talents. But, till yours afford you subsistence, (let me speak frankly as a friend), I must supply your wants. After inviting you here, I must not abandon you. If you want money, this very moment tell me; you must have no other creditor than Voltaire.' I thanked him for his kindness, assuring him, that, for some time, I should have no occasion for it, but would not hesitate to apply in case of necessity.

'Well,' said he, 'I depend upon your promise. Meanwhile, tell me, in what are you to employ yourself?'—'Alas, I know not; it is you that must tell me.'—'The theatre, my friend, the theatre is the noblest of all pursuits; there we arrive, in one day, at glory and fortune. A single successful play is sufficient to procure, for a young man, both wealth and celebrity; and application will render you successful.'—'I feel no want of ardour,' replied I, 'but what shall I compose for the theatre?'—'A good comedy.' said he, in a determined tone.—'Ah, sir, how should I draw portraits? I never saw the faces.' He smiled at this answer, and said, 'Well, write tragedy.' I answered, that I was somewhat better acquainted with its characters; and that I would try my powers in this kind of composition. Thus passed my first interview with this illustrious man.

On leaving him, I took lodgings with a cook in the *Rue des Maçons*, near the Sorbonne. My lodging cost me nine

livres * a month, and for eighteen sols I had a tolerably good dinner, part of which I kept for supper; in short, I lived very well. Yet my fifty crowns would not have gone very far. But I found an honest bookseller, who agreed to purchase my translation of the Rape of the Lock, and gave me a hundred crowns † for it. This sum was in bills indeed, which were not equal to ready money. However, a Gascon, with whom I had formed an acquaintance at the coffee-house, found out, in the street of S^t. André-des Arts, a grocer, who agreed to take my bills, provided I purchased goods to that amount. I bought twelve guineas worth of sugar, and, after having paid the money, I begged him to take back the sugar and sell it for me. I lost little by the transaction; so that the fifty crowns I brought from Montauban joined to the 280 livres ‡ that the sugar yielded, would enable me, without borrowing from any one, to go on, till the issuing of the next academic prizes.

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* 7*s*. 6*d*. † Twelve guineas. ‡ £12.

Lodging and board together would, for eight months, come only to 280 livres;* for other expences, I had 142 livres.† It was quite enough; for, by keeping in bed, I should use little wood in winter. In short, I could go on, till midsummer, without anxiety; and, if I should gain the prize of the French academy, which was 500 livres,‡ it would carry me to the end of the year. This calculation kept up my spirits.

My first employment was the study of the dramatic art. Aristotle's Art of Poetry; P. Corneille's Reflections, his Discourses on the Three Unities; the Greek Theatre, the Modern Tragic Writers, were all eagerly and rapidly perused. I longed to make a trial of my powers; and the first subject, which my impatience suggested, was the revolution of Portugal. The political interest of this subject was too weak for dramatic effect; still weaker was the manner in which I had hastily conceived and handled it.

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* £12. † About £6. ‡ About 20 guineas.

Some scenes, which I communicated to an intelligent actor, led him to augur well of me. But the theatre, he said, was the proper place for studying the dramatic art; and he advised me, through the medium of Voltaire, to procure a ticket of free admission to it. 'Roselli is in the right,' said Voltaire, 'the theatre is the school for us all. It must be open to you. I should have thought of it sooner.' A ticket of admission to the French theatre was freely granted me; and, from that time, I never, for a single day, missed taking a lesson there. I cannot express how much this constant study forwarded the progressive enlargement of my ideas, and of any little capacity which I might have received from Nature. I never witnessed the representation of a tragedy, without making some reflections upon the resources of the art, and without acquiring some new degree of warmth in style, imagination, and feeling.

In order to draw from the fountain of good tragic subjects, I ought to have

gone deep into the study of history; and I should have had courage to do so, but I had not time. I ran slightly over ancient history; and, being struck with the subject of Dionysius the tyrant, I never rested till the plan was conceived, and all the springs of action invented and arranged; but I said nothing to Voltaire, because I wished both to make it entirely my own performance, and to present it to him with all the advantage which the last finish would give it.

It was, at this time, that I met, at his house, with the man of all others whom I have loved most, the worthy, the virtuous, the wise, Vauvenargue.* His person had been cruelly treated by Nature, but his soul was one of her rarest works. I thought I saw in him an infirm and suffering Fenelon. He expressed kindness for me, and I easily obtained permission to visit him. His conversations, could I have collected them, would have made an excellent book. Some traces of them may

* See note (2) at the end.

be seen, in the collection which he has left, of his thoughts and meditations. But, eloquent and feeling as his writings are, his conversations with us were, I think, still more so. I say, *with us*; for I commonly met, at his house, a man entirely devoted to him, and who, by that very circumstance, soon gained my esteem and confidence; this was Beauvin, the same who afterwards wrote the tragedy of the *Cherusci*, a sensible man, and not devoid of taste; but of a very indolent character, and naturally fond of pleasure, though almost as poor as myself.

The perfect agreement of our sentiments, with regard to the marquis de Vauvenargue, formed a kind of sympathy between us. In order to study the taste and disposition of the public, we met, every evening after the play, at the coffee-house *de Procope*, the tribunal of criticism, and the school of young poets. There we always talked together; and, on the days when there was no play, we passed our afternoons in solitary walks. Thus we became

every day more necessary to each others enjoyment, and felt greater regret at parting. At last, Beauvin said to me, 'Why should we part? why not live together. The fruit-dealer, with whom I lodge, has a room to let; now, by keeping house at our joint expence, we shall live much cheaper.' I answered, that this arrangement would be extremely agreeable to me; but that just now I could not think of it. He asked the reason, and urged me so strongly, that I felt myself under the necessity of explaining it. 'The exactness,' said I, 'with which I have hitherto paid my landlord, must have gained me a degree of credit with him, which I should not find elsewhere, and of which I must immediately avail myself.' Beauvin, who was worth a hundred crowns,* bade me not be uneasy upon that head; that he could advance me what I needed; and that he had a project in view, which might enrich us both. I then laid open to him my

* Twelve guineas.

own hopes and resources. I shewed him the piece which I was to offer for the prize of the French academy; it was so many ingots of gold. I shewed him also the plan, and the first scenes of my tragedy. He answered for its success; it was the mine of Potosi. The marquis de Vauvenargue lodged at the Hotel de Tours, *Petite rue de Paon*; opposite to this hotel was the house of Beauvin's fruit-dealer, where I now took up my lodgings. His plan was, that we two should publish a periodical paper; but this did not prove so good a speculation as he had hoped. We had not enough of venom; so that, as the paper contained neither an unjust and severe criticism upon works of merit, nor bitter satire against good authors, it had little sale. However, by means of this little *item*, and of the prize of the academy, which I was fortunate enough to obtain, we reached the autumn; both ruminating, I on tragic poetry, and he on his tender engagements.

He was ugly, bandy legged, and was al-

ready even come to a good age, yet he was the favoured lover of a young nymph of Artois, of whom he talked every day with the most tender regret; for he endured the miseries of absence, and I was the echo that answered to his sighs. Though much younger than he, my mind was occupied with other cares. The heaviest of my anxieties was the repugnance which the keeper of the hotel already shewed to give us credit. The baker and grocer were still willing to supply us, the one with bread, and the other with cheese, which formed our supper; but dinner was, every day, like to fail us. I had one hope remaining. Voltaire, who strongly suspected that my pride was greater than my opulence, had proposed, that the little poem, crowned by the academy, should be printed for my benefit; and had insisted on a bookseller reckoning with me, deducting the expence of printing. But the bookseller had either made little of it, or was fonder of his own profit than of mine; for he said he had no-

thing to give me, as half the edition, at least, remained on his hands. Well, said Voltaire, 'give me what remains; I will find sale for it. He set out for Fountainebleau, where the court then resided: and the subject proposed by the academy having been a panegyric on the king, Voltaire undertook to disperse this panegyric, estimating, at his own price, the author's profit. I was counting upon this sale, without however being too sanguine; but there was no appearance of Voltaire arriving.

At last, our situation became such, that Beauvin said to me, with a sigh, 'My friend, our resources are exhausted, we have not enough now to pay the water-carrier.' His spirits, I saw, were sunk, but mine were not. 'Do the baker and grocer,' said I, 'refuse us credit.'—'No,' said he, 'not yet.'—'Then all is well,' said I, 'we may easily do without the water-carrier.'—'How so?'—'How? Why, just by going ourselves to draw water at the fountain.'—

'What! have you courage to do so?'—'Doubtless I have: much courage indeed it requires. It is night; and even in daylight, where, pray, is the disgrace of a man serving himself?' Then, taking the pitcher, I went proudly and filled it at the neighbouring fountain. Returning with the pitcher in my hand, I met Beauvin coming to me with open arms, in an ecstacy of joy. 'See! my friend, it is she herself! She is come! She has left friends, family, and all for me! Is not this love?' I turned my eyes in speechless astonishment, and, still holding the pitcher in my hand, I saw a tall fresh looking girl, well made, and rather pretty. She saluted me without the least embarrassment; but the contrast, between this romantic incident, and our present situation, threw me suddenly into such a violent fit of laughter, that they were both stunned. 'Madam,' said I, 'you are welcome; you could not choose your time better, nor arrive more opportunely.' And, after the first civilities had passed, I went down

to the green grocer: 'Madam,' said I, 'this is an extraordinary day, a festival. You must, if you please, assist us in doing the honours of the house; and enlarge somewhat the acute angle of cheese, which you give us for supper.'—'But what is this woman doing here?' said she. —'Oh! madam, it is a miracle of love, and we must never ask an account of miracles. All that you and I should know on the subject is, that, this evening, we must have a third more of that good cheese, which we will soon pay for, if it be the will of God.—'Aye,' said she, 'if it be the will of God But, when one has not a penny, it is not just the time to be thinkingof love.'

Voltaire came from Fountainebleau, a few days after, and filled my hat with crown pieces, telling me they had been produced by the sale of my poem. Although the distress, in which I was, might have excused my accepting his bounty, I yet took the liberty of representing, that he had sold this little work too much

above its value. But he gave me to understand, that those, who had paid liberally, were persons from whom neither he nor I could, with propriety, refuse any thing. Some of Voltaire's enemies thought I should have quarrelled with him on that account. I did no such thing; but, thinking that there would have been more impropriety in refusing, than in accepting, this money, I set out with it to pay all my debts.

Beauvin had received some assistance from the country; I had none to look for from that quarter, and my finances were likely to be soon at an end. It was, therefore, neither just nor possible, considering his new mode of life, that our expenditure should be any longer common.

In this condition, one of the most cruel I ever experienced, when, watering every night my pillow with tears, I looked back, with regret, on the plenty and tranquillity I had enjoyed at Toulouse, it happened, either through the favourable influence of my star, or the good character

that Voltaire gave of me, that a woman, whose memory I revere, asked me to undertake the instruction of her grandson. The recollection of this event must, indeed, be every way dear to my heart; what inestimable pleasures of society and friendship has it diffused over my life! what years of happiness has it made me enjoy!

Her son-in-law, a director of the East-India company, of the name of Gilly, had embarked in a maritime trade, which first enriched, and then ruined him. He was left a widower, with a son and daughter, of whom madame Harenc had agreed to take charge. It is impossible to conceive a more agreeable old woman than madame Harenc; and she possessed, besides, the greatest good sense, the most uncommon prudence, and most steady virtue. She was ugly, at first sight, to a repulsive degree; but the charms of her mind and character soon shone through this ugliness, and made it be, not forgotten merely, but loved. Madame Harenc had an only son, as ugly, and as

agreeable, as herself. He was M. de Presle, who, I believe, is still alive, and has been long distinguished, by his taste and discernment, among the lovers of the arts. Their society was selected with care, and had an intimate, confidential, and peaceful, character. It was always serene, and sometimes gay. The feeling, taste, and understanding, of its members, were in perfect unison. It was constantly embellished by a few women, who were tenderly attached to each other. We had the fair Desfourniels, the regularity, delicacy, and inimitable elegance of whose features threw the most able painters into despair; and Nature seemed to have taken pleasure in forming a soul exactly corresponding with so beautiful a form. We had also her sister, madame de Valdec, the then happy mother of the unfortunate de Lessart, whom we have seen slain at Versailles with the other prisoners from Orleans. We had also the young Desfourniels, who had neither the same beauty, nor the same character, as her

mother; she was even a little satirical, but withal so agreeable, that we readily forgave the too eager warmth of some of her sallies. A mademoiselle Lacome, the intimate friend of madame Harenc, behaved with a judicious mildness, which agreed well with all these characters. M. de Presle, curious after all literary novelties, formed them into an exquisite collection, of which he gave us the first taste. M. de Lantage, whose castle I inhabit, in this valley, and his eldest brother, an intelligent man, passionately fond of Rabelais, introduced among us the best style of the ancient gaiety. Nor, talking of this charming society, must I forget the worthy M. de l'Osiliere, who, next to Vauvenargue, was the truest philosopher I ever knew. The contrast between the depth of his understanding, and the unaffected simplicity of his character and manners, brought La Fontaine to our recollection.

Into this family, then, I was introduced, and was soon treated like a son.

Conceive my happiness when, besides so many other pleasures, I found my pupil to be a young man of a good disposition, perfectly innocent and docile, with a degree of memory and intelligence which made none of my lessons be lost upon him. He died before the age of manhood; and Nature, in him, destroyed one of her fairest works: he was handsome as Apollo, yet I never could perceive that he had any suspicion of his own beauty. By his side, and without depriving him of any of the time and care due to his studies, I completed my tragedy. This year also I gained the prize of poetry; so that I should number it among the happiest of my life, had it not been for the distress into which I was thrown by the death of my mother. The kindness of madame Harene afforded me every consolation of which so deep an affliction was susceptible. I left her, in consequence of my pupil being recalled by his father, who destined him for another kind of study. But, ever since that

time, till the death of this respectable woman, she continued tenderly attached to me, and always treated me as one of her own family.

My tragedy being finished, it was time to submit it to Voltaire's correction, but Voltaire was at Cirey. I saw clearly, that my wisest plan was to wait his return to Paris. How much should I have been assisted by the critical examination and advice of such a master! But the more my work would have gained by his criticism, the less it would have been my own. Perhaps too, by requiring efforts beyond my strength, he might have discouraged me. Having been led, by these reflections, to form a different resolution, I went and asked the players to hear my piece read. It was very favourably listened to: the three first acts and the fifth met their full approbation; but they acknowledged, that the fourth was too weak. The truth is, I had formed a different plan for the fourth act, but had relinquished it as too bold. I now saw,

that an excessive prudence had rendered me frigid; and I resumed my boldness. I asked three days to compose another act, which I was to read on the fourth. During the interval, I slept little; but this long watching was fully repaid by the approbation with which my new act was read, and the idea of my powers, which was inspired by so speedy and prosperous a performance. Then began the tribulations I had to undergo in the capacity of an author.

The first arose from the distribution of the characters. When the performers granted me free admission to the theatre, mademoiselle Gaussin had solicited most actively in my favour. The parts of princesses were regularly assigned to her; she excelled in all tender characters which required only the natural expression of love and grief. She possessed beauty, and that of the most interesting kind; her tones went to the heart; and her look, when in tears, had an inexpressible charm. Her performance, in

a character that suited her, was every thing that could be wished; so that she had inspired this verse, addressed by Zara to Orosman:

*L'art n'est pas fait pour toi, tu n'en as pas besoin.**

We may thus suppose how much she was beloved by the public, and secure of its favour. But for characters which were to display pride, strength, and tragic emotion, her powers were too feeble; that voluptuous softness which suited so well with tender characters, was directly opposite to the vigour which the part of my heroine demanded. Yet Mademoiselle Gaussin had made no secret of her desire to perform it; she had expressed it to me in a manner the most flattering and seductive; and both times that my performance was read, had affected the most lively interest, both in itself and its author.

New tragedies were then rare, and still rarer were the parts that were expected to prove successful; but the motive which

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* Art is not made for thee, thou needst it not.

weighed most strongly with her, was the desire of snatching this part from an actress who was daily carrying off some of hers. The jealousy of talent never inspired a fiercer hatred than that of the fair Gaussin for the youthful Clairon. The latter had not the same charming figure; but her voice, her features, her action, and, above all, the energy and pride with which she supported her character, made her admirably fitted for the expression of violent passions and lofty sentiments. Since she had seized on the parts of Camilla, Dido, Ariana, Roxana, Hermione, and Alzira, there had been a necessity for yielding them. Her performance was not subjected to rule, as in the sequel; but it had already all the essence of excellent acting. In a vigorous, lofty, and enthusiastic character, such as that of Aretia, there could be no hesitation between her and her rival; and unwilling as I was to offend the one, I at once offered it to the other. Gaussin could not conceal her resentment. She said, 'it

was well known by what kind of seduction Clairon had obtained the preference.' She was in the wrong; but Clairon, incensed at this accusation, made me follow her into her rival's box, where, without forewarning me of what was to happen, she said, 'Well, Madam, here he is, brought by myself; and that you may judge if I have seduced him, or even solicited the preference he has given me, I declare to you and to himself, that if I accept his part, it must be from your hands that I receive it.' At these words, throwing the manuscript upon the front of the box, she left us together.

I was then just twenty-four, and found myself alone with one of the most beautiful of women. Her trembling hands clasped mine, and her fine eyes were fixed on me with a beseeching look. 'What have I done,' asked she with her sweet voice, 'to deserve the mortification and distress that you cause me? When M. de Voltaire requested your admission to this theatre, it was I that made the pro-

posal. When you read your performance, no one was more sensible of its beauties than I. I listened attentively to the part of Aretia, and was so deeply affected, that I think it impossible for me not to give a just representation of it. Why then deprive me of it? It belongs to me, if by no other right, at least by that of seniority. You do me injustice when you give it to another; and, I doubt very much if it be your own interest. Trust me, it is not a laboured and noisy declamation that suits this character. Think well before you decide. Anxious as I am for my own success, I am not less so for yours, to which it will give me the greatest pleasure to contribute.'

I had now certainly a most painful effort to make. My eyes, my ears, my heart, were exposed defenceless to the sweetest of all enchantments. Charmed in every sense, moved to the very soul, I was on the point of yielding, and of falling on my knees before her who seemed so well disposed to receive me. But the fate of my work was at stake, of my only

hope, the dependence too of my poor children; and the alternative of complete success or failure was so fully present to my mind, that this interest prevailed over all the emotions with which I was agitated.

'Mademoiselle,' replied I, 'had I been so happy as to form a character like that of Andromache, of Iphigenia, of Zara, and of Ines, I should throw myself at your feet, and entreat you to embellish it still more. No one is more sensible than I of the charm with which you express an affecting grief, a timid or tender love. But unhappily the action of my piece is not susceptible of such a character; and though the powers which mine requires be less rare, less precious, than those beautiful talents with which you are endowed, still you must own they are quite different. One day I may be able to avail myself of your sweet accents, your enchanting looks, your eloquent tears, and your divine beauty, in a character worthy of you. Resign the dangers of my first appearance to her

who is willing to brave them. You may at once retain the honour of having yielded me this character, and avoid sharing with me the dangers which attend its performance.'—'It is enough,' said she, 'with stifled resentment. You will have it so; I yield.' Then taking up the manuscript, she left the box, and finding Clairon in the green room, said, with an ironical look, 'I restore you without regret the character from which you expect such success and glory. I agree in thinking that it suits you better than myself.' Mademoiselle Clairon, with a modest pride, took it; while I silently cast down my eyes, till this scene was over. But in the evening, when my actress and I supped by ourselves, I breathed at liberty from the restraint she had laid upon me. She was not a little gratified by the constancy with which I had stood this trial; and it laid the foundation of that lasting friendship, which has continued through the rest of our lives.

This was not the only character which

gave me uneasiness. Grandval, whom I intended to perform Dionysius the Elder, refused to appear in any other character than Dionysius the Younger. I was obliged to give the first to an actor called Ribou, who was younger than Grandval. Ribou was handsome and well made, and his manner was not deficient in dignity; but he was so totally devoid of intelligence, that there was a necessity for explaining his part to him in common language, and teaching him word for word, as if he had been a child. However, by dint of hard labour, I brought him to a capacity of acting it tolerably; and when the dress was a little disguised, his youth was no longer found to injure the theatrical illusion.

The time of rehearsal came. Then it was that the connoisseurs began to pass sentence. They fixed particularly upon the fourth act, which, as I said before, had appeared too bold even to myself. The critical moment was that in which Dionysius the Younger, with the view of

disarming the movers of sedition, kept his mistress as a hostage in his father's palace. Mademoiselle Clairon heard people saying that the piece would split upon this rock, and would go no farther. She proposed to assemble at her house a few persons of taste, whom she was accustomed to consult; to read the play without giving any notice of the passage we were afraid of, and see what they would think. I agreed; and the council was assembled, consisting of the following persons:—

First, we had d'Argental, the vile parasite of Voltaire, and an enemy to all talents which threatened to meet with success. Next Chauvelin, the public accuser of the jesuits, who, by acting this odious part, acquired some degree of celebrity. It was said of him,

Quelle est cet grotesque ebauche?
Est-ce un homme? est-ce un sapajou?
*Cela parle, &c.**

We had also the count de Praslin,

* What odd half-formed creature is this? Is it a man? Is it a marmoset? It speaks.

who, like d'Argental, was nobody except in the green room, till his cousin thought proper to invest this useless being with diplomatic and ministerial honours. Lastly, we had the vile marquis of Thibouville, noted, even among the infamous, for the impudence with which he practised the most loathsome vices, and the excess to which he carried a luxury as disgusting as it was vain and effeminate. The only merit possessed by this man, loaded with every kind of infamy, was that of repeating verses with a broken and enervated voice, and an affected softness, which suited his character.

How came such persons to possess credit and authority at the theatre? It was by paying court to Voltaire, who did not feel sufficient contempt for the homage of unworthy flatterers; and by persuading the young duke d'Aumont, that he could not manage the French theatre better, than by following the advice of Voltaire's friends. Our young actress had been dazzled by the air of judgment and conse-

quence assumed by these gentlemen; her respect for their understanding astonished me. I read my work, to which they listened in the most solemn silence; and mademoiselle Clairon, having then assured them that I was very ready to take advice, begged them freely to give me theirs. D'Argental was asked to speak first. Every one knows how he gave an opinion; broken words, with intervals of mysterious silence, vague, obscure, and indeterminate expressions, were all I could extract from him; till at last, gaping like a fish, he declared, that we must see how it would take. After him, M. de Praslin said, that really this play contained many things worthy of reflection, and, in an important tone, advised me to think of it. The Abbé Chauvelin, shaking his small legs from the top of his arm chair, assured us that it was a great mistake to suppose a tragedy so easy a thing; design, plot, characters, language, all together, it was no children's play. For his part, he did not wish to pass too se-

vere a sentence, yet he could not help recognizing this as the work of a young man; as to other particulars, he referred to the opinion of M. d'Argental. Thibouville spoke in his turn, stroking his chin with his hand to shew the beauty of his ring. 'He might,' he believed, 'understand tragic poetry a little; he had repeated and composed so much, that he should be qualified to judge. Yet how could he enter into particulars after hearing it just once? All he could do was to refer me to the standards of dramatic excellence. This expression would sufficiently shew what he meant. By reading Racine and Voltaire, I might easily see the style in which they had written.'

Having listened with the greatest attention, without hearing any thing clear or specific upon the merits of my work, it struck me that, from an apprehension of giving pain, they might, when speaking before me, have assumed this unmeaning language. 'I leave you with these gentlemen,' whispered I to Clairon,

'r they will explain themselves more fully in my absence.' When we met in the evening, 'Well,' inquired I, 'have they talked of me more clearly when absent than present?'—'Indeed,' said she, laughing, 'they have talked quite at their ease.' —'But what did they say?'—'They said this play might possibly succeed; but possibly also it might not. And all things considered, one will be answerable for nothing; and another thinks nothing can be depended upon.'—'But did they make no particular remark; on the subject, for instance?'—'The subject; aye, that is the critical point. Yet how can they judge? The public is so changeable.' —'Well, what do they think of the story?'—'Why, as to the story, Praslin does not know what to say, nor d'Argental what to think. The other two are of opinion that it must be judged of at the theatre.'—'Did they say nothing of the characters?'—'They said mine would be fine enough, if.... that of Dionysius would be well enough, but....'—'If!

but!—well what followed?'—'They looked in each other's faces, and said no more.'—'But what do they think of the fourth act?'—'Ah, as to the fourth act, its lot is freed; it will either fail or be exalted to the skies.'—'Come,' replied I, briskly, 'I welcome the omen; it is in your power, Madam, to turn the prophecy in my favour.'—'How so?'—'In this way: at the moment when young Dionysius opposes your deliverance, should the audience appear to think this effort of virtue too much, wait not till a murmur break out, but hasten to reply with these lines:

*Va ne crains rien,' &c.**

The actress understood me, and, as will soon appear, she went beyond my hope.

During the rehearsals of my play, I met with an adventure, which, though formerly related to my children, must now be repeated. It was more than two years since I had left Toulouse, when I had

* See note (3) at the end of the volume.

paid only one year of my brother's board at the Irish seminary. A whole year was now due, and by great economy I had laid by a hundred crowns to pay it. But the difficulty was to transmit this sum safely, and without expence, to the place of its destination. Boubée, an advocate from Toulouse, and member of the academy of Floral games, was then at Paris; I called upon him, and found him in company with a man decorated with a red ribbon, whom I did not know. I asked him if he knew of any safe method of transmitting my money: he said he knew of none. 'Goodness,' exclaimed the man with the ribbon, whom I took for a soldier, but who was only a knight of the order of Christ, 'is it not M. Marmontel whom I am fortunate enough to meet? He does not recognize his Toulouse friends.' I acknowledged, with confusion, that I did not know to whom I had the honour of speaking. 'To chevalier d'Ambelot,' said he, 'who used to applaud you so heartily when you gained

prizes. Well, though you be so ungrateful, I will do you this little service, and will forward your twelve guineas to the Irish seminary. Give me your address. To-morrow morning you shall receive a bill for this amount, payable at sight; and when the superior informs you that the money is paid, you can send it me at your leisure.' Nothing could be more obliging; and I heartily thanked the chevalier for his readiness in doing me this good office.

Talking of Toulouse, the conversation took a gay turn, and I began to hold forth on the amusing originality of character which appeared in that country. 'I am sorry,' said Boubée, 'that you, who used to frequent our bar, were not present when I pleaded the cause of the painter of the town-house. You know Cammas, that ugly, stupid fellow, who every year daubs an effigy of the new provost. A woman in the neighbourhood accused him of having seduced her. She was with child; she demanded either

marriage, or high damages for the loss of her innocence, which she had set up to sale since the age of fifteen. The poor devil was in despair, and came to tell me of his disgrace. He swore that she herself had seduced him; he was even for explaining to his judges the manner in which she had done it, and offered to draw a picture of the transaction, and hold it up to the audience. . . . Hold your peace, said I, it becomes you indeed, with that great snout of yours, to set yourself up as a poor seduced young man. I will plead your cause, and get you out of the scrape, if you will promise, while the cause is pleading, to keep quiet by my side; and, whatever I say, never to utter a word; do you understand? otherwise you will be cast. . . . He promised to do whatever I wished. Well, the day being arrived, and the cause having come on, my adversary began a long harangueupon the modesty, the weakness, and the frailty of the sex, and upon the artful snares that were laid

for them. Upon its coming to my turn, I began thus: ...The person, said I, for whom I plead, is ugly, he is a beggar, he is a fool; (he began to murmur, but I imposed silence.) As to his ugliness, gentlemen, look at him; as to his beggary, he is a painter, and what is worse, the city painter; as to his folly, let the court just take the trouble of asking him a question. ...These three great truths being once established, I reason thus: A girl can be seduced only by money, by understanding, or by appearance. Now my client cannot have seduced this girl by money, since he is a beggar; nor by understanding, since he is a fool; nor by appearance, since he is ugly, and the ugliest of all men; whence I infer that he is falsely accused. ...My conclusions were admitted, and an unanimous sentence was given in my favour.'

I assured Boubée that I would not forget a word of this curious pleading; and at taking leave, thanked anew the cheva-

lier d'Ambrai for the service he was to do me. Next day, a tall servant in livery, whose hat was bordered with broad Spanish point-lace, brought me the bill, which I immediately sent off.

Three days after, as I was walking, in the morning, through the street of the Comedie Française, a Languedocian, of the name of Favier, a man very well known afterwards, called upon me from the window of the second story. He invited me to come up to his room, which I did, and found a table covered with oysters, and five or six Gascons seated round it. 'My friend,' said he, 'a slight accident obliges me to keep my room, and these gentlemen are so good as bear me company. We are just breakfasting; will you sit down with us.' The slight accident was no other than a warrant to arrest his person. Favier was drowned in debt; but as he still retained credit with his wine-merchant, baker, and oyster woman, he gave us oysters and

champaign as plentifully, and as gaily, as if he had been swimming in wealth. This man was as careless as a savage, and his morals were dissolute to the last degree; yet he was agreeable, full of understanding and knowledge, spoke well and fluently, and understood business so well, that, had he possessed more activity, and more respect for himself, he might have been qualified to fill the greatest employments. I associated little with him; yet I liked his frankness, gaiety, and natural eloquence; nay, to confess the truth, I found a dangerous attraction in his taste for pleasure, which resembled that of Horace.

The knight of the red ribbon, d'Ambelot, was of this party. I repeated my thanks for his bill. 'You are in jest,' said he, 'can a slighter service be exchanged between townsmen? for whatever you may say, I must always reckon you a Thoulousan.' On my rising to go away, he said, 'I am going also, and my

carriage is below. Where do you wish to be set down?' I at first declined his offer; but he made a point of my stepping in. 'Only allow me,' said he, 'to look in at the door of one of my friends in *la Rue de Colombier*. I have just two words to say, and shall be back instantly. Well,' continued the scoundrel, 'you have seen honest Favier; he is the most spirited, generous fellow in the world, but he has no kind of order or management. After spending a large fortune, he is now undone; yet he continues to spend as lavishly as ever. He is now in distress, which, if possible, I must relieve; for it is our duty to assist a friend in distress.'

As soon as we arrived at the hotel, he alighted from his carriage, and came back murmuring to himself in very bad humour. I asked him the cause of his irritation. 'My friend,' said he, 'you are young, and new to the world; take care whom you trust; there are few, indeed, who can be safely relied on. This man, for instance, to whom I would have trust-

ed my whole fortune, this marquis of Montgaillard—' 'I know him. What has he done to make you angry?'—'Yesterday evening, (but I tell you this under seal of secrecy; repeat it to no one; I would not wish to ruin him); yesterday evening, in a house where the company were playing, he was mad enough to join them. As I never play, I attempted to dissuade him; but in vain. He punted, and lost; he doubled, redoubled the stakes, and lost his whole money. He came, and besought me to lend him all I had about me. I had just twelve louis, which I had promised to give honest Favier this morning, for the payment of an urgent debt. I explained to Montgaillard how much I needed them, without telling him for what purpose, and he gave me his word of honour to return them this morning. I gave him the money; he staked, and lost. And, now that I come, expecting to receive it, my man has either gone out or concealed himself, and poor Favier, who is waiting for me,

must suppose that I have broke my promise, a thing which I never did to any man in my life. Have I not reason to be angry? You, sir, who understand so well what handsome conduct is, say, have I not?'—'Chevalier,' said I, 'it is now three days since your bill went off; it is therefore due, and I will pay it immediately.'—'No,' said he, 'no; I will rather borrow.'—'That,' said I, 'is what I will on no account admit of. This money would be lying useless in my hands, and, since you need it, it is yours. You must indeed allow me to pay it without delay.' He made the most handsome resistance; but I pressed him so obstinately, that he was obliged to yield, and to accept of my hundred crowns.

Some days after, a letter from the superior of the seminary struck me like a thunderbolt. In this, he reproached me for having trifled with him so far, as to send him a piece of useless paper instead of a bill. 'The man,' said he, 'on whom your adventurer has impudently

drawn a bill, owes him nothing. I, therefore, return it protested.' Only conceive my fury. The swindling me out of my poor hundred crowns was a great enough crime; but this was nothing compared with the horrible treachery of making me be suspected, if not of dishonesty, at least of unbecoming levity. 'Heavens!' cried I, 'how will my brother be now treated.' Frantic with grief and rage, I put on my sword, (for, on devoting myself to the theatre, I had changed my profession), and ran to d'Ambelot's. I asked for him. 'Ah! the wretch,' answered the porter; 'he is at Fort l'Evesque. He has cheated us all out of the little money we had.' I did not pursue him into his prison, but learned, shortly after, without much affliction, that he died there.

I immediately went and communicated to madame Harenc my distress at this unlucky adventure. 'It is certainly,' said she, 'a most sacrilegious theft. But will you sup with me?' 'Yes, madam.'— 'Then I leave you, just for an instant.'

And, accordingly, she returned some moments after. 'I am thinking,' said she, 'of your poor brother, who is suffering perhaps under the ill humour of this Irish priest. A new bill, my friend, must be sent him to-morrow.'—'Yes, madam, such is my intention, if you can only point out a proper banker.'—'You shall have one. Now, let us talk of your rehearsals. Are you satisfied with the way in which they go on.' I told her my uneasiness about the obscure oracles which had been delivered at mademoiselle Clairon's. She laughed heartily. 'Do you know,' said she, 'what will be the consequence? Whether your piece succeeds or fails, they will equally have foretold it. But, remember, in either case, that you sup with me on that day, along with our common friends; for we intend either to rejoice or to grieve along with you.'

While she was talking to me in this friendly manner, her man of business came in, and spoke a few words. When he went out; 'Here,' said she, 'is a bill,

which will not be rejected like that of the chevalier.' But when I proposed to give her the money; 'Dionysius,' said she, 'Dionysius is my debtor; he will pay well.'

My only anxiety, and a sufficiently heavy one, was now about the fate of my tragedy, an event of such importance to me, that I hope to be forgiven for the moments of weakness, which I am going to acknowledge.

At that time, the author of a new piece had a little grated box, in the third circle, over the stage, for himself and his friends. Here I might truly be said to sit upon thorns. I went half an hour before the curtain rose, and, till that time, retained some degree of firmness, amid all my agitation. But, when my ear was struck with the sound of the curtain rising, the blood froze in my veins. In vain were scent bottles held to me; nothing had any effect, till I heard the noise of applauses, at the end of the first scene. From that time, things went on always better

and better, till the passage in the fourth act, about which such threatening predictions had been made; but, as this moment drew near, I was seized with so violent a tremor, that, without exaggeration, the teeth chattered in my mouth. If an extreme agitation of the soul and senses were mortal, I should have died; when the sublime Clairon, seizing, as it were, by violence, the mind of the spectators, pronounced these lines;

Va ne crains rien, &c.

and the theatre echoed with redoubled applauses. Never did man pass from deeper apprehension into a more sudden and heart-felt joy. So strongly was my soul agitated by this last feeling, during the rest of the performance, that I breathed only in sobs.

At last, it concluded, and then I heard, from the pit, the sound of applause and acclamation loudly calling upon me to appear. I had now to go down and appear on the stage; but I had not strength to

drag myself; my knees bent, and it was necessary to support me.

Merope had been the first play in which the author was called for, and Dionysius was the second. A thing which has since become so common, as to be no way flattering, was then an honourable distinction, and it was granted me at the three first representations. But this kind of intoxication arose from circumstances, which, in the public eye, greatly enhanced the merit of my work. Crebillon was already old; Voltaire was becoming so; no young man had hitherto appeared to fill their place. I fell, as it were, from the clouds; this first production of a young provincial, of a Limosin, only twenty-four, seemed to give a wonderful promise. And, when pleasures are in question, the public, as is well known, are prone to indulge extravagant hopes. But woe to him who deceives them! Reflection soon convinced me of this truth; nor were the critics tardy in giving me the information. Yet I enjoyed some

days of pure and tranquil happiness, particularly at the supper with madame Harenc, to whose house M. de Presle conducted me after the play. His worthy mother was waiting for us; she took me in her arms, and, as soon as she heard of my success, bedewed me with tears. So tender a reception awakened the recollection of my mother, and a stream of bitterness then mingled with my joy. 'Ah! madam,' said I, melting into tears, 'why have I no longer that affectionate mother, whose memory you recal? She would embrace me thus, and would be so happy!' When our friends came, they thought only of congratulating me. 'Come,' said madame Harenc, 'come, and comfort this poor boy. He is weeping for his mother, who would, he says, at this moment, have enjoyed so much pleasure.'

This melancholy reflection was only for a moment, and the friendship they expressed soon took entire possession of

my soul. Ah! if the unfortunate are relieved by communicating their sorrows, the fortunate too experience a lively and delicious pleasure in meeting with hearts which partake their happiness. I have always found it easier to retire into myself in grief than in joy. Whenever my soul is sad, it seeks to be alone; but I have need of friends to be happy along with me.

As soon as the fate of my play was decided, I informed Voltaire of my success, and asked permission to dedicate it to him. You may see, in the collection of his letters, the satisfaction with which he heard of my good fortune, and the kindness with which he received my homage.

The same year, that I had the misfortune of losing my mother, Vauvenargue also died. I needed consolation for my sorrows; and found it agreeable to pour them out in my poem to Voltaire. This poem was the most rapidly composed of

any of my works; verse came spontaneously; the whole was finished in an evening, and has not been altered since.

Voltaire's prophecy was fulfilled. In a day, in a moment almost, I became rich and celebrated. Of my riches I made a proper use, but it was otherwise with my celebrity. It became the cause of my dissipation, and the source of my errors. My life had hitherto been obscure and retired. I lodged in the *Rue des Mathurins*, with two hard students, Lavirotte, and the abbé de Prades; who were employed in translating, one the theology of Huet, and the other, the natural philosophy of Maclaurin, the disciple of Newton. We had also staying with us two Gascon abbés, agreeable idlers, and inexhaustible in their gaiety. While we were busied in our studies, they ran over the town, and, on their return in the evening, diverted us with the news they had collected, or with stories of their own invention. The houses which I commonly visited were those of madame Harenc, and

her friend madame Desfourniels, where I was always welcome; that of Voltaire, where I enjoyed, with delight, the conversation of my illustrious master, and of mademoiselle Denis, his niece; for that lady was agreeable with all her ugliness, and her easy and unaffected character had imbibed a tincture of that of her uncle. She had much of his taste, his gaiety, his exquisite politeness; so that her society was liked and courted. All these connections tended to inspire me with courage and emulation, and to infuse into my compositions more warmth and animation.

How instructive, in particular, did I find it, to have a daily opportunity of listening to the social intercourse of the two most enlightened men of their age. Nothing can be conceived more rich and copious than the conversations of Voltaire and Vauvenargue. Voltaire's consisted of an inexhaustible flow of interesting facts, and sallies of fancy; while Vauvenargue displayed an eloquence full of

grace, gentleness, and wisdom. Never were discussions conducted with such intelligence, mildness, and candour; but what charmed me more was, on one side, the respect Vauvenargue shewed for Voltaire's genius, and, on the other, the tender veneration of Voltaire for the virtue of Vauvenargue. Neither flattered each other with vain adulation, or weak compliance, but honourably distinguished themselves by a freedom of thought, which never interrupted the harmonious union of their sentiments. But, at the time I am speaking of, one of these illustrious friends was no more, and the other was absent; so that I was left too much to myself.

After the success of Dionysius, a society, seducing, frivolous, and full of curiosity, laid hold upon me, and dragged me into the vortex of Paris. It became a kind of fashion for every one to shew at his house the author of the new play. I was flattered by this attention, and had not fortitude to decline it. Being every day invited to

dinner or supper, at houses where the landlord and his guests were equally strangers to me, I was carried along, as it were, from one society into another, often without knowing whence I came, or whither I was going, and was so fatigued by the perpetual change of objects, that, even during my leisure moments, I could no longer apply to any thing. Yet, I must own that I took pleasure in this variety of changing scenes; and even my friends, while they recommended propriety and moderation, thought I should yield to the sort of desire that people had of seeing me. 'By conducting yourself properly,' said they, 'you will gain, if not friendship, at least good wishes, and personal esteem. It is useful for you to observe the manners of the world; and this you can never do well without a near view of it. You are fortunate, therefore, in being so early and so favourably introduced into company.'

My friends were certainly in the right,

if I had been wise enough to make a moderate use of this advantage. But a too easy temper was my fault, from youth; and, when opportunity threw out the allurement of pleasure, I never could resist it.

During this period of thoughtless dissipation, I was one day visited by Monet, afterwards director of the opera-comique, with whom, at that time, I was not acquainted. 'Sir,' said he, 'I have a message to you, which, I believe, will not be disagreeable. Did you ever hear of mademoiselle Navarre?' I answered, that the name was new to me. 'She is,' continued Monet, 'the wonder of our age for wit and beauty. She is just come from Brussels, where she was the ornament and delight of marshal Saxe's court; having seen Dionysius the tyrant, she is eagerly desirous of knowing the author, and bid me invite you to dine with her to day.' I readily engaged myself.

Never was I more dazzled than by the first sight of this girl; for her appearance

was still more brilliant than beautiful. She was in a Polish dress, of the gayest appearance, and two long ringlets floated on her shoulders; jonquil flowers, entwined with her hair, wonderfully heightened the brilliancy of her fine complexion, and the fire of the two sparkling eyes, with which it was animated. The reception she gave me redoubled the danger of viewing so many charms; and her conversation soon confirmed all I had heard of her wit. Ah! my children, could I have foreseen all the troubles that this day would cause me, with what terror would I have saved myself from the danger into which I was running! This is no fable; it is by the example of your father that you must learn to dread the most seductive of all passions.

Among the guests, which the enchantress had this day collected, I found some well informed and agreeable persons. At dinner, there was a great deal of gaiety and gallantry, but without any impropriety. Mademoiselle Navarre could

hold, with a light hand, the reins of colloquial freedom. She was skilful also in dividing her attentions; and, till towards the end of the dinner, distributed them so well, that no one had cause to complain. But, by degrees, she behaved to me in a manner so very particular; and, when we went to walk in the garden, shewed so clearly her desire to be left alone with me, that the company, one after another, silently glided away. As they were filing off, her dancing master came in, and I saw her take a lesson. The dance, in which she exhibited, was then known under the name of the *Aimable Vainqueur*.* In it she displayed all the graces of an elegant form, while her motions and attitudes were expressive, sometimes of dignity, sometimes of voluptuous softness. The lesson continued little more than a quarter of an hour, and Lany was dismissed. Mademoiselle Navarre, then humming the tune to which she had

* Amiable Conqueror.

danced, asked if I knew the words. I knew them; they began thus:

Aimable vainqueur,
Fier tyran d'un coeur;
Amour, dont l'empire
Et le martyre
*Son' pleins de douceurs, &c.**

'But,' said I, 'if I did not know these words, I would invent them; so much is the present moment fitted to inspire them.' A conversation, begun in this manner, was not likely to end very soon. We passed the evening together, and, during a short interval of tranquillity, she asked me about the new work, in which I was employed. I explained to her the subject and plan, but complained of the involuntary dissipation into which I was forced. 'Well,' said she, 'would you wish to compose quietly, comfortably, and without interruption, come and spend some months at the village of Avenay, in Champagne, where my father has a small

* Amiable conqueror, proud tyrant of the heart: Love, whose slavery, and whose sufferings, are full of sweetness.

house, and some vineyards. He has the management of a mercantile house at Brussels, and cannot leave that city. I have come, therefore, to attend to his rural affairs. To-morrow, I set out for Avenay, and shall be alone there till after the vintage. As soon as I have every thing prepared for your reception, come and live with me there. It will go hard, if I, and excellent champaign, do not inspire you with good poetry.' What prudence, what virtue, what human strength, could have withstood the charm of such an invitation? I promised to set out at the first signal she gave me. She required the most solemn promise that I would not entrust our secret to any one, having, as she said, the strongest reasons for concealing our connection.

Between her departure for Avenay and mine, two months elapsed; and though the interval was filled up by a very constant and animated correspondence, even this could not save me from the weariness of absence. Her letters, inspired by

a lively and brilliant imagination, while they buoyed up mine with the sweetest illusions, produced only a more ardent desire of meeting with her, who, even in absence, could raise me to these transports. I employed this period in disengaging myself from most of my intimate connections. I told some, that my new employment required solitude; while with others, I expressed an intention of visiting my native place. Without entering into any explanation with madame Harenc, nor with mademoiselle Clairon, I contrived to prevent them from feeling any anxiety; but, dreading the curiosity and penetration of madame Denis, I kept my plan of retirement a profound secret from her. Here I must acknowledge myself to have been in the wrong; for, even before my literary success, she had shewn herself my friend, and had neglected nothing which could render her house agreeable to me. My friends were kindly received, and became her own; my old friend, the abbé Raynal, must remember,

as well as myself, the agreeable meetings at supper, which we had often at her house. His brother, the abbé Mignot, the worthy Cideville, the two Gascon abbés of *The Rue des Mathurins*, were all frank and merry; while I, still youthful and gay, might be said, on these occasions, to be the life of the company. I was merry almost to madness. The lady and her guests were neither much wiser nor graver; and, when Voltaire could escape from his marchioness Duchâtelet, and his suppers in high life, he thought himself most happy in coming to take a hearty laugh with us. Alas! why were not my wishes satisfied with this easily obtained and tranquil happiness? What more was necessary to refresh me after the toil and study of a long day? And what was I going to seek in that dangerous Avenay.

The letter, so much desired, so impatiently expected, at length arrived, and fixed the period of my departure. I was then lodging, by myself, in the vicinity

of the Louvre. Being freed from anxiety, with regard to the expence of my table, I had separated from the companions with whom I formerly kept house, and had, in my service, only an old woman and a barber, each at five shillings a month. I engaged the latter to find me a courier belonging to the post office who agreed to carry me, with my little portmanteau, to Rheims. Having found one immediately, I set out. I rode, on horseback, from Rheims to Avenay; and, though love be said to have wings, truly he had none for me. I was bruised almost to pieces before I arrived.

Here, my children, a veil must be thrown over my lamentable follies. Though I was then very young, and though the time be distant, I do not choose to appear, before your eyes, in this state of delirium and intoxication. It is proper, however, you should know, that the deceitful sweets which I was allowed to taste, were mingled with the most odious bitters. The most seducing of women was also the

most capricious; amid the enchantments she held out, her coquetry was continually inventing some new means of exercising dominion over me; her will, to which mine was always obliged to be subservient, was changing every instant; she made, as it were, a kind of game of rendering me alternately the happiest of lovers, and the most wretched of slaves. We were alone; but she had the art of disturbing our solitude, by raising up unforeseen events. The irritability of her nerves, and the remarkable activity of her animal spirits, occasioned hysterics, which alone were sufficient to torment me. When she was in the most brilliant health and gaiety, her fits began with involuntary bursts of laughter; these were succeeded by a rigidity in all her limbs, by tremor and convulsive motions, that ended in tears. These paroxysms were more grievous to me than to herself; but they rendered her still more dear and interesting; too happy, if caprice had not filled up every lucid interval! Placed

alone, as we were, amid the vines of Champagne, how many ways had she of afflicting and tormenting a young man; and to this her talent and inclination alike prompted her. Every day she contrived some new experiment to make upon me. She composed a romance, as it were, in action, and busied herself in bringing on the scenes.

The nuns of the village would not allow her to walk in their garden. She thought this an odious and insupportable privation; she cared nothing for any other walk. I must go along with her, and scale the walls of the forbidden garden. The guard came, with his musket, and begged us to go out: she paid no regard to him. He levelled his piece at me: she watched my countenance. I went up to him, and proudly slipped a crown into his hand, though without her perceiving it; for she would have thought it a mark of weakness. At length, she took her voluntary departure, and we retired, without any noise; but slowly, and in good order.

Another time, she came, and, with an alarmed look, shewed me a letter, real or fabricated, from an unfortunate and jealous lover, who, enraged at my happiness, threatened to avenge her disdain upon my person. After giving me this letter, she marked, if I read it without emotion; for she valued nothing so much as courage, and any apparent symptoms of fear would have ruined me in her estimation.

No sooner had I passed through one trial than she contrived another, and never left me a moment to breathe. But of all the situations, into which she brought me, the following was the most critical. Her father, learning that she had a young man living with her, had written a reproachful letter. She gave me an exaggerated description of his anger. By her own account, she was undone; her father would come immediately and turn us out of doors. There was just one way, she said, of pacifying him, which was in my power; but which she would rather die

than mention; my love for her alone could enable me to find it out. I understood her perfectly: but though, in her presence, I forgot all the rest of the world, I did not so easily forget what I owed to myself. I adored her as a mistress, but would have nothing to do with her as a wife. I wrote to M. Navarre, expatiating on the perfections of his daughter, and expressing the purest esteem, the most innocent friendship, for her; but went no farther. The good man replied, that, if my designs were honourable, (as she, apparently, had given him to understand), there was no sacrifice which he would not readily make for our happiness. In my reply, I laid great stress upon my esteem, upon my friendship, upon the perfections of his daughter; I made no allusion to any thing further. I have reason to believe, that she was piqued; and, either out of revenge, for the refusal of her hand, or with the view of discovering what character my love would assume in a fit of jealousy, she chose the most keen and

piercing dart, with which to rend my heart. In one of those moments, when I had reason to believe her wholly occupied with me, as I was with her, she pronounced the name of my rival, of that jealous rival with whom she had threatened me. I heard, from her lips, '*Ah! my dear Betisi.*' Conceive, if possible, the fury which seized me; I rushed out, like a madman, and, calling loudly for her servants, ordered post horses instantly. But, scarce was I shut up in my room to prepare for setting out, than she flew to the door, tearing her hair; then, knocking with frightful violence, and the most piercing cries, she forced me to open it. Certainly, if her only object was to see a wretch out of his senses, her triumph was complete. But she was terrified at the condition into which she had thrown me, and now appeared casting herself, in despair, at my feet, and asking forgiveness for an error, of which her tongue alone, she said, was guilty, but to which neither her thoughts nor her

heart had consented. It seems hardly credible, that this scene could be acted, and, at that time, such a thought never occurred to me. But the more I have reflected, since, on the inconceivable eccentricity of this romantic character, the more possible it has appeared, that she had wished to see me in this new situation; but that, afterwards, affected by the violence of my grief, she had been inclined to moderate it. Never, at least, did I see her so feeling, and so beautiful, as at this dreadful moment. Accordingly, after having been, for some time, inexorable, I, at length, allowed myself to be mollified and persuaded. But her father, a few days after, having recalled her to Brussels, we were under the necessity of separating. We took leave, promising solemnly always to love each other; and, hoping soon to meet with her again, I returned to Paris.

The cause of my retirement was no longer a secret; a ballad-monger, the abbé de Lattaignant, being then at Rheims,

of which place he was canon, had learned my adventure, and had made it the subject of a poem to mademoiselle Navarre. This poem was handed about town; and I thus acquired the reputation of successful gallantry, which I would willingly have dispensed with; for it made many envious of me, and consequently my enemies.

The day after my arrival, I had a call from my two Gascon abbés, of *The Rue des Mathurins*, and received a most serio-comic admonition. 'Where have you been?' said the abbé Forest. 'A pretty conduct indeed! You make off, like a robber, without a single farewel to your best friends! You set out for Champagne. Your friends sought you everywhere; but sought in vain. Where is he? Nobody knew any thing about him. And, in this manner, you could abandon a woman, so interesting, and so full of sensibility; you could leave her alarmed, and weeping. What a barbarous conduct! Go! you libertine, you do not deserve

the love she has for you.'—'Pray, sir,' said I, 'who is this Ariadne in tears? Of whom are you speaking?'—'Whom!' replied the abbé Debon, 'why of the despairing mistress, who, thinking you drowned, made you be searched for in the very fishing-nets of S^t. Cloud; but learned, afterwards, that you had betrayed her; in short, of mademoiselle Denis.'—'Gentlemen,' said I, firmly and seriously, 'mademoiselle Denis is my friend, but nothing more. She has no right to complain of my conduct. I kept it a secret from her, as well as from you, because it was proper to do so.'—'Aye, a secret indeed!' replied Forest, 'about mademoiselle Navarre, about a—' 'Very good, sir,' said I, interrupting him, 'you do not mean, I suppose, to offend me; but, if you were to go farther, you would offend me. I never took the liberty of censuring you, and beg you will follow the same rule with me.'—'Indeed,' replied Forest, 'you talk very much at your ease. You set out gaily to drink

the finest champaign in the world, in company with a charming girl, and leave us to pay the broken bottles. We are accused of being your accomplices. Madam Denis herself views us with an unfavourable eye, receives us coldly; in short,' continued he, in a pathetic tone, 'since we must tell all, she gives us no more suppers. The poor woman is in the deepest affliction.'—'Oh! I understand you: here then,' said I, 'is the high crime committed by my absence. Upon my word, I no longer wonder at your giving me so violent a scold. No more suppers! Come, come, you must have them again. You shall be invited to-morrow.' An air of rejoicing appeared on their visages. 'So, you believe,' said one of them, 'that we shall now be forgiven?'—'Yes,' said the other, 'she is a good woman; our peace will soon be made.'—'The peace of friendship,' said I, 'must always be easily made. It is otherwise with love; and the total absence of that passion, from our quarrel,

will be proved, by no trace of it remaining to-morrow. Adieu, I am going to call on madame Denis.'

She received me with some degree of anger; and complained of the anxiety which my scamper had occasioned to her, as well as to all my friends. I endured her reproaches; and acknowledged, that a young man, at my age, was liable to weakness and folly. As to keeping my journey secret, I was commanded to do so; it would have been wrong in me to disclose it. 'Now, madam,' continued I, 'do not go to appear offended; you would be thought jealous; and you ought rather to contradict, than strengthen, such a rumor.'—'Contradict it!' said she, 'Can it have begun to spread?'—'Not yet,' said I, 'but your discarded guests might possibly give it currency. I have just seen two of them, this morning, who have been exceedingly angry with me; and insist, from the interruption of your suppers, that you must be in despair.' I told her what had passed; she laughed, and

saw that really it was advisable to invite them without delay, lest she should still be considered as *an Ariadne in tears.* 'Now this,' said I, 'is what I call friendship, quiet, indulgent, and always unaltered; those, who enjoy it, spend their whole life satisfied, happy, and in good agreement: whereas love—' 'Love,' cried she, 'Heaven preserve me from ever feeling it. Love does very well for tragedy, but the comic style is the one for me. You, indeed, must learn to express the fury, the agonies, and transports, of tragic love; and, for that purpose, you need some person to instruct you. I congratulate you on having, as I understand, provided yourself very well in that respect.'

Ah! yes, I knew already, by fatal experience, that the passion of love, even when apparently happy, is yet a violent and painful condition. But, till then, I had known only the least of its troubles; a much longer and severer punishment was now awaiting me.

The first letter, I received from mademoiselle Navarre, was animated and tender; the second, though still tender, was less animated; the third was long of arriving, and it shewed only the pale embers of an expiring flame. I complained, and to this complaint she replied only by slight excuses.—'Entertainments, public places, company to see,' were the alleged causes of this negligence and coldness. 'I should know women; amusement and dissipation were so charming to them, that, in absence at least, they must be allowed to enjoy them.' Then, indeed, I began to experience the true miseries of love. I wrote three eager and imploring letters;—but no answer. This silence appeared, at first, so incomprehensible, that, after hearing from the postman the overwhelming words, *Nothing for you*, I went myself to the post-office to see whether some letter, addressed to me, had not been left by mistake; nay, after being there once, I returned again. Daily

deceived, in this continual expectation, I dried up, and wasted away.

I forgot to mention, that, one day, after my arrival at Paris, as I was passing by the cloister Saint Germain-l'Auxerrois, an old picture of Cleopatra struck me as resembling mademoiselle Navarre. I immediately bought, carried it home, and made it my only consolation. I shut myself up with this picture, and, sighing to it, asked, in pity, a few lines to restore me to life. Fool that I was to think that this image could have heard me! But she, whom it resembled, was equally insensible. Such excessive rigour and disdain did not seem natural. I thought, either that she must be ill, or that her father locked her up and watched her like a criminal. Every thing appeared possible, nay probable, except the dreadful truth.

Notwithstanding the pains I took to conceal my grief, mademoiselle Clairon had made me acknowledge the cause, and had employed every method she could

imagine, to flatter and soothe me. One evening, when we were in the green-room, at the theatre, she heard the marquis of Brancas-Cereste saying, that he was just come from Brussels. 'My lord marquis,' said she, 'may I ask if you saw mademoiselle Navarre?'—'Yes,' said he, 'I saw her more beautiful and more brilliant than ever, leading the chevalier de Mirabeau chained to her car. She is fond of him, and he adores her.' I was present; I heard this answer; my heart was stunned with the blow. I went home, and fell down like a sacrificed victim. Oh! my children, how very foolish is it for a young man to hope fidelity from a woman already noted for her frailty, and whom pleasure has once seduced to renounce her honour.

Yet she was rather romantic than abandoned, and seemed to have changed her character, in her amours with the chevalier de Mirabeau. But the romance did not last long, and its end was miserable.

I was still confined with a fever, which seized me the very evening on which I learned my misfortune, when, one morning, a handsome young stranger came into my room, and told me his name. He was the Chevalier de Mirabeau. 'Sir,' said he, 'I introduce myself to you, under two characters;—first, as the intimate friend of your deceased friend, the marquis de Vauvenargue, who was my old brother officer in the king's regiment. It is my wish and will be my pride to deserve and to obtain the place he held in your affection. My other character is not equally favourable; it is, as your successor in the favour of mademoiselle Navarre. I must witness for her, that she feels the most tender esteem for you. I myself have often been jealous of the manner in which she talked of you; and, at my departure from Brussels, she particularly urged me to call upon you, and ask your friendship'

'Chevalier,' replied I, 'you see I am ill; it is you that have made me so; nor,

to confess the truth, do I feel myself disposed to form so sudden a friendship with a man, from whose too agreeable qualities I have suffered so much. But, the frank and honourable manner, in which you introduce yourself, inspires me with a great esteem for you; and, since I am sacrificed, there is some consolation in its being to such a man. Be so good as sit down. We will talk of our friend M. de Vauvenargue; we will talk also of mademoiselle Navarre, and I will say nothing but what is favourable of both.'

After this conversation, which was long and interesting, he said, 'I hope you will not be offended, by learning that mademoiselle Navarre has given me your letters. Here they are; they are alike honourable to your heart and understanding. I am desired to give them up to you, and receive hers in return.'—'Pray, sir,' said I, 'has she been kind enough to write a few words authorizing me to put them into your hands.'—'No,' said he, 'we both thought you would take it upon

my word.'—'Excuse me,' said I, 'I would readily entrust you with any thing of my own; but I will not lightly disclose the secret of another. However, there is one way of bringing the matter to an agreement, and you shall be satisfied.' I then drew from my scrutoire the packet of mademoiselle Navarre's letters, saying, 'You know her hand-writing, and see that I abstract nothing from this collection; you will be able to say, that her letters have been burned.' I immediately threw them into the fire along with my own, and added, as they were burning together, 'I have fulfilled my duty; my sacrifice is completed.' He approved my delicacy, and went away quite satisfied.

The fever had not left me; I was melancholy; I would no longer see any one. I felt it necessary to breathe a purer air than that of the Louvre; and I wished also to have access to a solitary walk during my convalescence; I went, therefore,

to lodge in the neighbourhood of the Luxembourg.

One morning, during my stay there, while I was still sick in bed, and the Savoyard, who served me, was absent, I heard somebody enter my room. 'Who is there?' No answer was given, but the curtains of my alcove were half opened, and, every thing being still dark, I felt myself embraced by a lady, who, pressing her face to mine, bathed me in tears. I again asked, 'Who are you?' But she, without answering, redoubles her embraces, her sighs, and her tears. At length she rises, and shews me mademoiselle Navarre, in a morning dress. Grief and tears rendered her more beautiful than ever. 'Madam,' cried I, 'can it be you? What motive brings you hither? Do you wish to be the occasion of my death?' No sooner had I said these words, than I perceived the chevalier de Mirabeau standing behind her silent and motionless. I thought myself raving.

But she, turning to him, said, with a tragic air, 'See, sir, the man, whom I sacrifice to you; the most ardent and faithful lover, the tenderest and best of friends; see the condition to which my love for you has reduced him. How criminal would you be, were you ever to make yourself unworthy of such a sacrifice.' The chevalier was struck dumb with astonishment and admiration. She then asked me, if I was able to rise. 'Yes,' said I.—'Well, rise and give us breakfast; for we wish your advice on matters of great importance, which we have to communicate.'

I rose, and when my Savoyard returned, caused him to bring coffee. As soon as we were alone, she began; 'My friend, the chevalier and I are about to render our love sacred at the altar; we are going to marry, not in France, for there we should meet with many difficulties, but in Holland, where we shall be free. Marshal Saxe is raging with jealousy; read the letter he has written to me.

The chevalier is there treated very slightingly; but he will bring him to account.' I represented, that a jealous lover was not bound to be just towards his rival; and that it was neither prudent nor possible to attack marshal Saxe. 'What do you mean by attacking?' said she, 'A duel, sword in hand? That is not the thing; you do not understand me. The chevalier, after his marriage, is to enter into the service of some foreign power. He is well known, and can make his choice. His reputation, his valour, his talents, and his appearance, will secure to him a rapid promotion; we shall soon see him at the head of armies; and, in a field of battle, he may try his strength with the marshal.'—'Excellent, madam,' said I, 'I quite approve of this plan, and recognize you both in so spirited a scheme.' Indeed I saw them as proud, and as well satisfied with their resolution, as if it had been to be executed next day. I afterwards learned, that after their marriage, in Holland, they had gone to

Avignon; that the brother of the chevalier, the pretended friend of mankind, and the enemy of his own brother, had possessed interest sufficient to drive him for shelter into the Pope's dominions; that, at the time when the sbirri came to arrest him, by order of the vice-legate, his wife was in child-bed, and the terror with which she was seized, on seeing them enter her house, threw her into so violent an agitation as brought on her death.

I wept for her; and, since that time, this friend of mankind, whom I discovered to be a hypocrite in morality, and a proud and malevolent court intriguer, became my mortal aversion.

I cannot express the almost immediate change which took place in my mind, on learning that the chevalier de Mirabeau was so much attached to mademoiselle Navarre, as to make her his wife. My love, and, above all, my jealousy, was at once cured. The preference she had given him appeared just and natural; and,

far from being mortified, I considered myself as doing a virtuous action in resigning her; and thereby recognized how much the anger and sorrow of love arose from the selfish feeling of wounded vanity.

Yet there remained, at the bottom of my heart, an uneasiness and ennui which I could not shake off. The picture of Cleopatra, though still before my eyes, had lost its resemblance; it no longer affected me, but it caused a disagreeable sensation, and I got it removed. This sadness was augmented by the loss of my poetical powers. Amid the delights and the torments of Avenay, I had still hours of inspiration, in which I could compose: Mademoiselle Navarre herself urged me to employ them. As she was afraid of thunder, we were obliged, on stormy days, either to dine or sup in her cellars, (which belonged to the marshal), and amid fifty thousand bottles of champaign, my brain could hardly fail to get heated. On these days, indeed, my verses were full of fumes; but these were dissipated

by reflection. As I proceeded, I read my new scenes to her. In order to sit in judgment on them, she ascended, what she called her throne; it was a hillock of turf, rising above the vineyards, and surrounded by a few shrubs. I wish you had seen, in her letters, the description of this throne, which, she said, awaited us; that of Armida was not fuller of enchantment. There, sitting at her feet, I read my verses, which, when approved by her, seemed the finest in the world. But now, that the charm was broken, and I saw myself alone in the world, the paths of the tragic art, instead of flowers, were, for me, strewed only with thorns. I was forsaken by the muse that inspired me; my genius and my soul sunk languishing, like the sails of a ship, when the wind which swelled them has suddenly failed.

Mademoiselle Clairon, who saw the languor into which I was fallen, sought anxiously to cure it. 'My friend,' said she, 'your heart needs some object of love; you feel listless because it is empty. You

must interest, must fill it. Is there not a woman in the world whom you can think agreeable?'—'I know,' said I, 'only one who could comfort me, if she chose; but would she be so generous?'—'We must see as to that,' replied she, with a smile.—'Am I acquainted with her; I will try to assist you.'—'Yes, you know her, and have great influence over her.'—'Well, what is her name? I will speak in your favour; I will say that you love with ardour and sincerity; that you can be faithful and constant; and that she is sure of being happy in your love.'—'So you really believe all this?'—'Yes, I am fully persuaded of it.'—'Be so good, then, as say it to yourself.'—'To me! my friend?'—'To yourself.'—'Ah, then it shall be my pride to comfort you.'

A new connection was thus formed, which, as may be easily supposed, was not of long duration; but it had the good effect of rekindling my poetical ardour. Never did love and the passion for glory form a closer union than in my heart.

Dionysius was again acted, and with the same success as at its first appearance. The part of Areta was sensibly improved by the additional interest with which it was performed by her, to whom nothing was dearer than my glory. She was more sublime, more transporting than ever. Imagine the pleasure with which the author and actress, both applauded, went to sup together.

I had such an enthusiastic admiration of Clairon's powers, that, in my passion for her, it was impossible to distinguish that part, which did not belong to love. But, independently of the charms of the actress, her brilliant youth, her liveliness and gaiety, rendered her a very desirable mistress. She had all the charms of an agreeable character, without any mixture of caprice; while her only desire, her most delicate attentions, were directed towards rendering her lover happy. So long as she loved, no one could love more faithfully, or more tenderly, than she. I could depend upon her as fully as upon myself; so that, being free from all anxiety, I spent

part of the day in composition, and reserved the other for her. I left her charming; I found her equally, and, if possible, still more, charming. What pity that, with with so seducing a character, so much levity should be joined; and that love so sincere, and even so faithful, should not have been more constant.

She had a friend, with whom we sometimes supped. One day, she said to me, 'Do not come this evening; you would find it unpleasant; the bailli de Fleuri is to sup there, and will take me home with him.'—'Oh,' said I, with the greatest simplicity, 'I am acquainted with him; he will be very willing to take me home too.'—'No,' said she, 'he will have only a vis-a-vis.' At this word, light broke in upon me. Seeing my astonishment, she said, 'Well, well, my friend, it is a fancy I have taken; you must just excuse it.'—'Can it be possible,' said I, 'that you are serious?'—'Yes; I am sometimes a fool; but I will never deceive you.'—'I am obliged to you,' said I, 'and yield my

place to M. le Bailli.' On this occasion, I felt courage and judgment; and an event, which happened next day, taught me, that a virtuous sentiment was much better suited, and more agreeable, to my heart, than a frivolous and transient inclination.

Rigal, an advocate from my province, called upon me, and said, 'Mademoiselle B * * promised never to marry without your mother's consent. Though your mother is no more, mademoiselle B * * is not the less faithful to her promise. A suitable match is now in her offer; but she will accept none without your consent.' At these words, I felt a revival, not of my former love, but of an inclination so warm, tender, and pleasing, as I could not have resisted, had my fortune and situation in life possessed the requisite stability. 'Alas!' said I, 'why do not my circumstances allow me to oppose the engagement, into which my dear B** is desired to enter? But, unhappily, the lot, I could offer, is too vague and uncer-

tain. My future prospects are liable to risks, on which hers ought not to depend. She deserves a solid happiness, and I can only envy him who is able to secure it to her.'

Some days after, I received, from mademoiselle Clairon, a note, expressed in the following terms:—'I need your friendship just now, and know you too well not to reckon upon it. I expect you to call upon me.' I went to her house; there was company. She immediately said, 'I have something to say to you;' and I followed her into her closet. 'You inform me, madam,' said I, 'that my friendship can, in some way, be useful to you: let me know how, and you may be assured of my zeal.'—'It is not your zeal, nor your friendship alone that I wish,' said she, 'you must restore me your love.' Then, with an ingenuousness, which, to any other person, would have been diverting, she told me, how little that *puppet*, the bailli de Fleuri, had been worthy of my jealousy. After this humble ac-

knowledgment, she employed all the seductive arts of an agreeable coquette, in order to regain a heart, whose love reflection had extinguished.

I then said to her, 'You have not deceived me; I will be equally sincere, and will consider it as my duty not to deceive you. We are formed, by Nature, to be friends, and such, if you please, we will continue during our whole life; but we must no longer be lovers.' I shall not enlarge on a dialogue which, on my side, led always to this invariable conclusion. Yet the sad and confused state, in which I left her, appeared to me somewhat too severe a revenge.

Having finished *Aristomenes*, I read it to the performers. Mademoiselle Clairon behaved with a cold dignity, at this recitation. The knowledge which the other performers had of our quarrel, only made their applauses the louder. They were curious to see, whether or not I would give her the part of the wife of Aristomenes. She too was anxious on the

subject; especially when she learned, that the other parts were distributed. At last, she received hers; and, a quarter of an hour after, she called upon me with one of her friends. 'Take it, sir,' said she, entering with her theatrical air, and throwing the manuscript, which had been sent her, on the table, 'I won't have the part without the author; the one belongs to me as well as the other.' I embraced her, and said, 'My dear friend; in that character, I am yours: ask no more. Any other sentiment would render us both unhappy.'—'He is in the right,' said she, to her companion, 'my foolish head would torment us both. Well, my friend, come and dine with your good friend.' From that moment, the most perfect intimacy was established between us; it has continued unaltered, during thirty years; and, though my new mode of life has removed us from each other, no material change has taken place in our mutual sentiments.

This frank and steady friendship which

reigned between us, led to one occurrence, which ought not to be overlooked.

Mademoiselle Clairon, being neither opulent nor economical, was often in want of money. One day, she said, 'I need twelve louis; can you supply me?'—'No; I have not that sum.'—'See, if you can get it, and bring it, this evening, to my box at the theatre.' Presently I set out in the chace. I had many wealthy acquaintances; but to them I did not choose to apply. I went to my Gascon abbés, and some others of that description; but found their purses all empty. Much disappointed, I went to mademoiselle Clairon's box, and found her *tête-a-tête* with the duke de Duras. 'You are very late,' said she.—'I have been in quest,' said I, 'of some money, which is due to me; but have found my trouble thrown away.' After saying these words, which were well understood, I was going to seat myself in the amphitheatre, when I heard somebody calling upon me, by name, from

the end of the corridor. On turning round, I saw the duke de Duras coming to me, and saying, 'I have just heard you mention, that you are in want of money: how much have you occasion for?' At these words, he drew his purse. I thanked him, saying, that my wants were not pressing. 'This is not answering me;' said he, 'what is the sum you expected to receive?' I at length said, it was twelve louis. 'Here they are,' said he, 'on condition, that, whenever you have the least occasion, you will apply to me.' And, when I urged him to take them back; 'Well,' said he, 'since you make a point of it, I take them; but remember, the purse, into which I put them, is yours.' I made no use of this credit; but, since that time, he has shewn me every sort of kindness. We were afterwards joint members of the French academy, and I had always reason to be pleased with his conduct; for he gladly embraced every opportunity of doing me a service. When I dined with him, he gave me always his

best champaign; and, even during his fits of the gout, he expressed pleasure at seeing me. He was said to be fickle; but this he certainly never was towards me.

To return to *Aristomenes*. Voltaire, who was then at Paris, wished to hear my play before it was acted; and I had read him four acts, with which he was pleased. But he was anxious about the act that was still to compose; and not without reason. In the four acts which he had heard, the story appeared, from one end to the other, to be complete and unbroken. 'What!' said he, after I had done, 'do you pretend, in this your second tragedy, to shake off the common rule. I indeed composed the Death of Cæsar in three acts; but it was for a college, and my excuse was the being obliged to introduce only men. But for you, upon the great theatre, and in a subject where you are under no restraint, to present a mutilated play, in four acts, when you have no example for so singular a

form! This, at your age, is an unhappy licence, which I cannot excuse.'—'Accordingly,' said I, 'it is a licence which I have no intention of taking. My play, as I have contrived it, consists of five acts; and I hope to have them all well filled up.' —'But how?' inquired he, 'I have heard the last act; all the others regularly follow each other; and you surely have no intention of taking up the story earlier.' —'No,' replied I, 'the story will begin and end, as you have seen; the rest is still a secret with me. Perhaps my design is foolish; but however dangerous the experiment may be, still I must make it; and, were you to discourage me, my labour would be all lost.'—'Well, my good fellow, go on; venture; be daring; that is always a good sign. In our art, as in that of war, there may be a fortunate temerity; and the greatest beauties often spring up from under the most discouraging difficulties.'

On the first day of representation, he was so good as sit behind me in the box;

and his emotion and trembling anxiety were almost equal to mine. 'Now,' said he, 'before the curtain rises, tell me how you have made out the act that was wanting?' I reminded him, that, at the close of the second act, it was said, that the wife and son of *Aristomenes* were about to be tried; and that, at the opening of the third, their condemnation was announced. 'Well,' said I, 'this trial was formerly supposed to happen between the acts, but now it is introduced on the scene.'—'What!' cried he, 'a criminal trial on the stage? I tremble.'—'Yes;' said I, 'it is a dangerous defile; but there was no shunning it. Clairon must save me.'

Aristomenes was nearly as successful as *Dionysius*; and, at every applause it received, Voltaire locked me in his arms. But he was astonished, and leaped for joy at the effect of the third act. When he saw Leonide, loaded with chains, appear, like a criminal, in the presence of her

judges; and then, by the grandeur of her character, confound them, and obtain full possession of the scene, and of the soul of the spectators; when he saw her distinguish the virtuous friends of Aristomenes from his treacherous enemies, and overwhelm the latter with the conviction of their baseness, Voltaire, amid the applauses with which the house resounded, exclaimed, 'Bravo! Clairon! *Macte animo, generose puer!*' *

No one assuredly can be more sensible than I, how little, in point of talent, I was worthy of his envy. Yet my success was sufficiently great to have rendered him jealous, had he been capable of that weakness. No! Voltaire was too sensible of his own superiority to dread vulgar talents. A new Corneille, perhaps, or a new Racine, might have vexed him; but it was not so easy, as men suppose, to trouble the author of Zara, of Alzira, of Merope, and of Mahomet.

At thi first representation of Aristo-

* See note (4) at the end.

menes, I was again obliged to shew myself on the theatre; but, on the following nights, my friends gave me courage to withdraw myself from the public acclamations.

An accident interrupted my success, and my pleasure. Roselli, the actor of whom I formerly spoke, performed the part of Arcires, the friend of Aristomenes, and performed it with equal warmth and intelligence. Neither his face nor his figure were good, he had even a very sensible lisp in his pronunciation; but he atoned amply for these faults, by the propriety of his action, and by an expression full of intelligence and animation. I ascribed to him the success which attended the catastrophe of my tragedy. It was determined, in the following manner:— Speaking, in the last scene, of the decree by which the senate had filled up the measure of their atrocity, he said;

*Theonis le defend, et s'en nomme l'auteur.**

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* Theonis forbids it, and names himself as the author.

Having then perceived that the public indignation was rising, he instantly, and in the most animated manner, advanced towards the pit, and cried out, as if to appease them,

*Je mélance et lui plonge uu poignard dans le coeur.**

The attitude, the gesture, which accompanied these words, made them feel as if they saw Theonis struck; and a burst of joy resounded through the whole house.

Now, after the sixth representation of my play, I was informed, that Roselli was seized with an inflammation in his breast, and an actor was proposed, whom I knew to be wholly incapable of filling his place. It was a very great loss to me to interrupt such crowded houses; but I should have thought it a much greater evil to degrade my work. I required that the representations should be suspended, till the health

* I spring forward and plunge a dagger into his heart.

of Roselli was restored; nor, till the following winter, did Aristomenes again appear on the stage.

On the first night of this new representation, the public, with lively emotion, again called for the author. I declined to appear on the stage; but I was in the back seat of a box. Some one, who was sitting in the pit, having discovered me, cried out, '*There he is!*' It was a front box; the whole pit faced about; I was obliged to come forward, and by a low bow to acknowledge this new favour.

The man, who took me in his arms and brought me to the front of his box, in order to present me to the audience, was M. de la Popliniere. He will occupy a considerable place in these memoirs, both from the injury he did, while wishing my good, and from the alluring and treacherous pleasures which I found in his society. Ever since the success of Dionysius, he had welcomed me to his house. But, at the period I am speaking of, I was much affected by his generosity, in offer

ing me a secure retreat, at the risk of displeasing a very powerful man, whom I had offended. The danger, from which he freed me, was occasioned by one of those youthful adventures, in which my imprudence involved me, and which may teach my children to be wiser than I.

BOOK IV.

During the time that I lodged in the neighbourhood of the Luxembourg, I was acquainted with an old actress belonging to the *opera-comique*, and a friend of Mademoiselle Clairon, called la Darimat. She had married Durancy, a comic performer, in a provincial company; and, being brought to bed at Paris, had prevailed on her freind to stand godmother to her child, while I was taken as godfather. It happened, in consequence of this christening, that madame Durancy, who sometimes heard me at Mademoiselle Clairon's house discoursing on the art of theatrical performance, one day said to me; 'Shall I give you a young and handsome actress to form? She aims at making her appear-

ance in tragedy; and she deserves any trouble you may take in instructing her. Her name is Mademoiselle Verriere; she is under the protection of marshal Saxe. She is a neighbour of yours. Her conduct is correct; and she lives in a very proper manner with her mother and sister. The marshal having, as you know, gone to visit the king of Prussia, we wish that, at his return, he should have the pleasure of finding his favourite on the stage, performing Zara and Iphigenia better than Mademoiselle Gaussin. If you will undertake to instruct her, you shall be installed to morrow. We will dine with her together.

My adventure with mademoiselle Navarre had not alienated marshal Saxe from me; he had even expressed kindness for me; and, before Aristomenes appeared on the stage, had asked me to come and read it to him. This recitation was performed by ourselves, and he was interested The part of Aristomenes particularly affected him, that of Leonide, he

thought, would have a good theatrical effect; 'But, zounds,' said he, 'what a strange woman, I would not have her on any account.' This was his only criticism. In other respects, he was satisfied, and expressed it with that blunt and generous frankness which suited a hero.

I was delighted, therefore, to have an opportunity of doing any thing agreeable to him; and most innocently, though most imprudently, accepted the proposal.

This favourite of the marshal was one of his mistresses, who had been given to him at the age of seventeen. He had a daughter by her, who has since been acknowledged and married under the name of Aurore de Saxe. At the birth of this child, he had settled on the mother an annuity of a hundred louis, and gave her, besides, five hundred a year for current expences. He entertained a sincere friendship for her; but she was no longer admitted to his parties of pleasure. The mild and ingenuous timidity of her cha-

racter now appeared to him insipid. It is well known, that marshal Saxe, along with much dignity and pride, had also a great inclination for coarse mirth. From taste, as well as system, he wished his armies to be merry; saying, that the French never fought so well as when they were led on gaily; and that, in going to war, the thing they dreaded most was ennui. He kept always an opera-comique in his camp; and it was there that he gave the order of battle. On those days, the principal actress used to come forward and say, 'Gentlemen, there will be no play to-morrow, because the marshal gives battle: on the day after, the Village Cock, the Merry Intrigues, &c.

Two performers belonging to this theatre, called Chantilly and Beaumenard, were his favorite mistresses; and he declared, that their rivalry and caprice *plagued him more than the Queen of Hungary's hussars.* I have read these words in one of his letters. For them it was, that he neglected Mademoiselle Navarre, whom he

found too haughty, not sufficiently complaisant and yielding. Mademoiselle Verriere, who was infinitely less artful, did not even aim at keeping her ground against these rivals; she seemed to trust for pleasing entirely to her beauty, and assisted it only by a character uniformly amiable, and by indolently allowing herself to be beloved.

The first scenes that we repeated together, were those of Zara with Orosman. Her figure and voice, the sensibility, the candour and modesty, which appeared on her aspect, were perfectly suited to her character; while, in mine, there was but too much vehemence and warmth. At our second lesson, on coming to these words, *Zara, you weep!* there was an end of my good behaviour.

The docility of my scholar made me assiduous; and my attention became so extraordinary, as to give rise to ill-natured comments. The Marshal was then in Prussia; and, on learning our intimacy, fell into a passion unworthy of so great a

man. The fifty louis, which Mademoiselle Verriere received monthly, were stopped; and he declared, that never in his life would he see either mother or daughter. He kept his word; nor was it, till after his death, and somewhat through my mediation, that Aurora was owned, and educated in a convent, as the daughter of this hero.

The deserted state, in which my Zara was left, overwhelmed us both with grief. I begged her to accept forty louis, which remained of the produce of my tragedy. But Mademoiselle Clairon, and all our friends, advised us, for some time at least, to give up seeing each other. And we followed this advice, though it cost us many tears.

The marshal returned: and I heard, from all quarters, that he was furious. Marshal Loewendal, and two of his other friends, Sourdes and Flavacourt, have since told me, how difficult they found it to moderate his anger. He went about in every company, at court, and to the

king himself, saying, that this little insolent fellow of a poet took all his mistresses from him; (though I had only those whom he forsook). He shewed a note of mine, which had been stolen by a treacherous footman from Mademoiselle Verierre. It luckily happened, that, in this note, talking of the tragedy of Cleopatra, in which I was employed, I had said, that Antony was *a hero in love, as well as in war.* 'Now,' said the marshal, 'you understand very well who this Antony is.' This allusion, which I certainly had never thought of, flattered and soothed him a little.

Nevertheless, my terrors were rendered more dreadful, by the determination I had formed, had he insulted me, to be revenged on him at the risk of my life. In this situation, one of the most painful I have ever experienced, M. de la Popliniere proposed, that I should retire with him to the country; while, from another quarter, the prince de Turenne relieved my affliction at the unfortunate situation in which my Zara was left.

This prince, meeting me one evening in the green-room of the Comedie Françoise, came up and said; 'Marshal Saxe has left Mademoiselle Verriere on your account. Will you promise not to see her again? In that case, her misfortune shall be repaired.' This explained the mysterious rendezvous she had given me, the evening before, in the *Bois de Boulogne*, and the tears she had shed at bidding me farewel. 'Yes,' replied I, 'I give the promise your highness requires. May Mademoiselle Verriere be happy with you. I will see her no more.' She became his mistress, and I was faithful to my promise.

I now retired, almost alone, to the country house of La Popliniere, which was then very different from what it had been, and afterwards became. I had full time to reflect on my own conduct. I contemplated the gulf, along whose brink I had passed. It was the hero of Fontenoy, the man whom the first nobility in the kingdom viewed with respect, and whom the king himself

treated with every distinction which can flatter a great man, it was he whom I had offended, without even the excuse of being led astray by a foolish passion. This weak and imprudent girl had made no secret of the favours she received from him, and of his being the father of her child. I was so well informed, and so fully convinced of the tremendous risk which we both incurred, that I never stole into her house, at improper hours, without trembling. I found, and left, her trembling still more. There is no pleasure which would not have been purchased too dear, by our continual fears of discovery. And, when the Marshal learned my temerity, though he might disdain to take my life, yet, had he only caused me to be insulted by one of his footmen, I had, in that case, formed a resolution, which I cannot think of without shuddering. Ah! my children, shudder, like me, at the dangers into which a too ardent youth made me run, for the sake of an accidental and transient intercourse, induced only by the allurement of pleasur

and opportunity. I have pointed out this hidden rock, in order to preserve you from shipwreck.

Shortly after, the marshal died. He behaved in the end magnanimously towards me, as the lion in the fable did towards the mouse. At the first appearance of Cleopatra, happening, as he left his box, to meet me full in the face, (a meeting which turned me pale), he was good enough to express his approbation in these words: 'Very well done, Sir; very well.' In him I sincerely lamented the defender of my country, and the man who had generously pardoned myself; and in order, as far as lay in my power, to honour his memory, I wrote the following epitaph:

A Courtray Fabius, Annibal à Bruxelles,
Sur la Meuse Condé, Turenne sur l Rhin,
Au leopard farouche il imposa le frein,
*Et de l'aigl rapide il abattit les ailes.**

* At Courtray Fabius, Annibal at Brussels, upon the Meuse Condé, Turenne on the Rhine; he gave reins to the fierce leopard, and stopt the rapid wings of the eagle.

The retreat in which I saved myself from the temptations of Paris, was soon to present me with others; but at that time it yielded only serious moral lessons. That you may know the cause of the silent and gloomy sadness which reigned in a place which had formerly been the abode of pleasure, I must recur for a moment to what was past, and mention how this enchantment had been formed and dissolved.

M. de la Popliniere was not the richest, but he was the most splendid financier of his time. He had taken the daughter of an actress first for his mistress, and afterwards for his wife. Not that he had intended to marry her; but she compelled him to it in the following manner:— The celebrated Madame de Tencin, having raised her brother to the dignity of cardinal, and introduced him into the council of state, had, through him, a secret but powerful influence over old Cardinal Fleury. Mademoiselle Daucour

got herself introduced to that lady, and assuming the character of an artless young girl, complained that Popliniere, after first seducing her, by the hope of marriage, had given up all thoughts of performing his promise. 'He shall perform it,' said Madame Tencin. 'But do not tell him you have seen me; dissemble with him.'

The critical moment drew near, when the farms of the revenue were to be let anew, and all the old farmers general were striving who should be retained on the list. Cardinal Fleury was informed that now was the time to put a stop to a scandal which afflicted every person of worth. Mademoiselle Daucour was represented as an interesting victim of seduction, and La Popliniere as one of those men who laugh at the promises by which they have surprized the artless credulity of innocence.

That a financier should publicly keep a mistress, was yet a luxury unauthorized

by custom; and the cardinal valued himself on being a supporter of good morals. When Popliniere therefore went to solicit his interest for the new leases, the cardinal asked him about Mademoiselle Daucour. 'She is a young person whom I have taken charge of,' replied La Popliniere; and he then began to extol her understanding, her talents, and her good education. 'I am very glad,' replied the cardinal, 'to hear you say so much good of her. This is just what every body tells me; and the king therefore intends to give your place to whoever shall marry her. It is quite just that, after seducing her, you should leave, as her marriage portion, the fortune, which, in consequence of your promise, she had a right to expect from yourself.' Popliniere attempted to deny his ever having formed such an engagement. But the minister insisted. 'You have ruined her; were it not for you she had still been innocent. You must atone for this injury.

This is the advice I give you; and unless you follow it without delay, I can do nothing for you.' To lose his place, or marry, —the alternative was urgent. Popliniere took the side which was least disagreeable. But he was desirous that this forced resolution should have the appearance of being voluntary. Next day, therefore, as Mademoiselle Daucour awoke, he said, 'Rise, and come with your mother to a place to which I will conduct you.' She obeyed. 'Listen,' said he, 'to the deed which we are going to sign.' It was the contract of marriage. The drama seemed to produce its effect. The daughter pretended to faint; the mother clasped the knees of him who thus completed his kindness, and fulfilled their wishes. He took the full enjoyment of their feigned gratitude, and so long as he could amuse himself with the hope of being beloved, his house appeared embellished by the charms of his brilliant partner. The highest company attended his suppers and balls. But anxieties and jea-

lous suspicions soon disturbed his quiet. His wife had taken her flight. Carried into a vortex where he could not follow, she went without him to evening parties; and people took an ill-natured pleasure in informing him, by anonymous letters, that he was laughed at by that brilliant court which his wife kept at his house. It was at this time that he began to invite me, though at first only to select parties. There I met the celebrated Rameau; Latour, the ablest of all our painters in crayons. Vaucanson, that wonderful mechanic; Carle-Vanloo, the great designer and painter; and his wife, who, with a voice like a nightingale, was the first who made us acquainted with the songs of Italy.

Madame de la Popliniere expressed kindness for me. She wished to hear Aristomenes read; and she appeared to me the best of all the critics whose advice I had taken. After hearing my play, she analyzed it with wonderful clearness and precision, traced the story from

scene to scene, remarked what places appeared to her fine, and what feeble; and in every correction that she asked, her observations struck me like rays of light. Every one was surprized at a penetration at once so quick and so correct; and though I received a good deal of applause myself at this recitation, yet I must say, her success was the more brilliant of the two. Her husband sat fixed in sad astonishment. Amid his admiration for this happy flow of memory and intelligence, for a warmth of eloquence, bordering on inspiration, in short, for this wonderful union of judgment and taste, we could see, through all his efforts to conceal it, an ill humour and vexation, of which the cause was known to himself alone. He wished to withdraw her from that splendid circle into which she had thrown herself; but this restraint was by her represented as capricious and tyrannical; hence arose those violent scenes which passed between them, when they were without witnesses.

La Popliniere consoled himself in our society, and particularly with me, by satires upon that round of company with which he said he was harassed. He had engaged me to take up my residence with him; he liked my simplicity, my frankness. 'We will live together,' said he; 'and if you take my advice, you will leave this world which has seduced you, as it formerly seduced me. And, pray, what do you expect from it?'—'Patrons,' said I; 'and some means of fortune.'—'Patrons! Ah! if you knew the sort of protection to be had from these people! Fortune! And, pray, have not I enough for both? I have no children; and thank heaven, never shall. Let us stay quietly together, for I feel every day more need of your company.'

Though very unwilling to let me escape, yet, as he courted Madame de Tencin, from political motives, he could not refuse her request to hear my tragedy read at her house; it was Aristomenes,

which had just been acted. The audience inspired respect. There I found assembled Montesquieu, Fontenelle, Mairan, Marivaux, young Helvetius, Astruc, and others, all scholars or men of letters. In the centre of these was a woman of profound intelligence and judgment, though enveloped in an outward appearance of good nature and simplicity, and who seemed rather housekeeper than mistress of the house. This was Madame de Tencin. I had to strain my lungs to the utmost in order to make Fontenelle hear me; and, though set close to his ear, was obliged likewise to pronounce every word with a strong and loud voice. But he listened so kindly, that I felt pleasure even in this laborious effort. I read, as you may suppose, in a manner extremely monotonous, without any shades and varieties of tone: yet I was honoured with the approbation of the assembly. I had even the honour of dining with Madame de Tencin, and from that day should have been entered on the list of

her guests; but M. de la Popliniere found no difficulty in persuading me, that there was too much wit going for me; and indeed I soon perceived that every one came prepared to act his part, and to exhibit himself as on a stage; and that this desire did not always leave conversation at liberty to follow its easy and natural course. Every one, as quick as he could, and as it were flying, seized the moment for throwing in his word, his anecdote, or his quick and pointed remark; and, out of a desire to find a fit opportunity, they went sometimes rather far in search of it.

In Marivaux, an impatience to prove his sagacity, and delicate penetration, was easily visible. Montesquieu was more tranquil, and waited till the ball came to him, but still he waited for it. Mairan watched his opportunity. Astruc did not deign to wait.* Fontenelle, alone, let it come without seeking, and made so moderate a use of the attention with which the company listened to him, that his de-

* See note (5) at the end.

licate remarks and agreeable stories never took up more than a minute. Helvetius, prudent and attentive, gathered to sow hereafter. This last was an example which I could not have had firmness to follow; so that there was little attraction for me in the society.

It was otherwise with that of a woman to whom my good fortune had introduced me, at the house of Madame de Tencin, and who, from that time, gave me a friendly invitation to visit her. This woman, who was beginning to select and form a literary society, was Madame Geoffrin. I was too late in accepting her invitation; and it was Popliniere, again, who kept me. 'What would you do there,' said he, 'it too is a rendezvous of wits.'

In this way he had made me his prisoner, when my adventure with Marshal Saxe happened. But what attached me most strongly to him, was the seeing how unhappy he was himself, and how much he needed my society. He was

continually harassed by anonymous letters, which assured him that a happy rival continued, even at Passy, to visit his wife. He watched her himself, and made others watch her, night and day; she knew it, and viewed him only as the jailor of her prison.

Then it was that I learned the miseries of a house, into which jealousy on the one side, and hatred on the other, have insinuated themselves like serpents. Here was a voluptuous residence, where arts, talents, and elegant pleasure, seemed to have taken up their abode. Yet this abundance of all the means of happiness, was poisoned by distrust and fear, by dismal suspicion and gloomy chagrin. I wish you had seen this couple sitting opposite to each other at table; the mournful taciturnity of the husband, the proud and cold indignation of the wife; the care with which their looks shunned each other, and the terrible and gloomy aspect with which they met, especially before their servants; the effort which it cost

them to address a few words to each other, and the dry and harsh tone in which they answered. It is difficult to conceive, how two beings, so strongly alienated, could live under the same roof; but she was determined not to leave his house; while, in the eyes of the world and of justice, he had no right to expel her.

Having at length learned the cause of this misunderstanding, I omitted nothing which could soothe the afflictions of him, whose heart seemed to lean on mine. A wretch, whom, since he is dead, I disdain to name, accused me as one of Popliniere's flatterers. Now I declare, in the first place, that I never received from him the slightest present; after which, I may acknowledge, without blushing, that, from a very sincere and tender attachment, I studied to please him. Equally remote from adulation or neglect, I did not flatter, but I consoled him; I did him the good office which Horace ascribed to the Muses, '*vos lene consilium et datis et dato gaudetis almæ.*' And would to heaven that

he had not been more indulgent to my vanity than I was to his! That spirit of property which makes us exaggerate the value of whatever belongs to ourselves, deceived him so much with regard to the young poet whom he had adopted, that whatever came from my pen appeared to him beautiful. Instead, therefore, of a severe friend, whom I should have needed, I found him only a very indulgent admirer. This is one of the causes to which I ascribe that weakness of application, which is but too evident in all the works I composed during my residence in his house.

Shortly after, he tired of his dismal country house, and removed to town; nor was it long till the adventure happened which produced a separation from his wife. Marshal Saxe was one day amusing the public in the *plaine des Sablons*, with a review of his Hullands; Popliniere, more harassed than ever with anonymous letters, which insisted that his wife received Marshal Richelieu every

night in her chamber, seized the time when she was at the review, to visit her apartment, and see whether a man could be introduced into it, notwithstanding the vigilance of a faithful porter. He was assisted in this search by Vaucanson * and Balot; the latter was a low attorney, acute and penetrating, but a very odd personage, from the hyperbolic language he used on trivial occasions, and from the mixture of meanness and pride in his character; for he was proud and haughty by starts, but habitually servile. He it was, who praised M. de la Popliniere for the delicacy of his skin; and who, in a moment of ill humour, said of him, *let him go sleep off the fumes of his gold.* As to Vaucanson, his understanding was wholly confined to his art; take him out of mechanics, and nothing could be more ignorant or stupid.

On examining the apartment of Madame de la Popliniere, Balot remarked that there was a carpet laid in the closet where her harpsichord stood, yet that

* See note (6) at the end.

in the chimney of this apartment there were neither wood, ashes, nor fire-irons, though the weather was already cold, and every one had fires. By inference, he thought of striking the back of the chimney with his cane; it sounded hollow. Then Vaucanson approached, and discovered that it was mounted on hinges, and so perfectly joined to the lining on the sides, that the juncture was almost imperceptible. 'Ah, Sir,' exclaimed he, turning to La Popliniere, 'what a beautiful work do I see! What excellent workman has done this! The plate is moveable; it opens; but the hinges are so nicely done! What a clever fellow must that be!'—'What, Sir,' said Popliniere, turning pale, 'You are sure, then, that this plate opens?'—'Sure! Sir, I see it,' said Vaucanson, transported with admiration and delight; 'Nothing can be more wonderful.'—'And, pray, what have I to do with your wonders? We came here indeed to admire!'—'Ah! Sir, one meets very seldom with such work-

men; I certainly have some that are very good, but none that'.... 'A truce with your workmen,' interrupted Popliniere, 'but send me one who can force this plate.'—'Tis a thousand pities,' said Vaucanson, 'to break such a master-piece.'

Behind the plate, an opening made in the partition wall was closed with a pannel of wainscot; which, in the adjoining house, was concealed by a mirror. This opened at will, and gave the clandestine tenant of the neighbouring apartment, free access into the music room. The unhappy Popliniere, who, I believe, sought only legal grounds of freeing himself from his wife, sent for a notary, and had his discovery and his disgrace certified on the spot, by a written statement.

His wife was still at the review, when some body came to tell her of what was doing at home. In order to obtain entrance, either willingly or by force, she begged Marshal Loewendal to accompany

her; but the door was shut against her, and the marshal would not take it upon him to force it. She had recourse to Marshal Saxe. 'All I ask,' said she, 'is, that you procure me access to my house, and an interview with my husband; by doing so, you will save me.' The marshal took her into his carriage, and when they came to the door, he himself alighted and knocked. The faithful porter, half opening the door, was going to tell him that he was forbid.... 'Do you not know who I am,' said the marshal. 'Learn that no door can be shut against me. Enter, Madame, into your own house.' He gave her his hand, and went in along with her.

La Popliniere came furiously to meet them. 'My good friend,' said the marshal, 'Why do you make all this uproar? Why do you thus exhibit your quarrels in public? Be assured you will gain nothing but ridicule by all this. Do you not see that your enemies are seeking to embroil you; and are employing,

for that purpose, every sort of stratagem? Do not be their dupe. Listen to your wife, who will justify herself completely, and who wishes only to live with you in a proper manner.' La Popliniere maintained a respectful silence, and the marshal went away, recommending decency and peace.

Madame de la Popliniere, now left alone with her husband, called forth all her courage and eloquence. She asked what new suspicion, what new slander, had induced him to shut his door against her? And when he talked of the pannel, she was indignant that he should believe her privy to this criminal invention. 'Was it not into his apartment rather than hers, that its contrivers had wished to penetrate? And how easily, by only bribing a servant, and two workmen, might they complete this passage from one house to the other. But, what! could there be a doubt as to the cause of an artifice so visibly invented to ruin her in his good opinion. 'I was too happy

with you,' said she, 'and this happiness has stirred up envy against me. Anonymous letters have not been enough; proofs have been necessary, and its rage has contrived this detestable machine. What do I say? Ever since envy has thus obstinately persecuted me, have you not seen the crime of which, in her eyes, I had been guilty? Where is there in Paris, another woman, whose repose, whose honour, have been so violently attacked? The reason is plain; none are so deserving of envy as I was, and should still be, had you been more just. I contributed to the happiness of a man, whose understanding, whose talents, and honourable rank in society, are a torment to the envious. It is you whom they wish to render both ridiculous and miserable. Yes, this is the motive of those anonymous libels which you every day receive: this the hoped-for success of that palpable snare which is now laid for you.' Then throwing herself at his feet, 'Ah, Sir, restore me your esteem;

your confidence; nay, I dare to say it, your tenderness; and my love shall avenge both myself and you, for the mischief done to us by our common enemies.'

La Popliniere, who unhappily was too fully convinced, remained inflexible. 'Madam,' said he, 'all your artful speeches do not alter the resolution I have formed, that we shall no longer live together. If you retire modestly, and without noise, I shall provide for you. But, if I must employ rigorous measures in order to make you leave my house, they shall be employed; and my soul shall be shut to every sentiment of kindness and indulgence.

She left the house. He allowed her, I believe, an aliment of twenty thousand livres * a year, with which she went to live, or rather to die, in an obscure corner, abandoned by that gay society which had flattered her so much, but which despised her, now that she was reduced to this unfortunate condition.

* About L.800.

A glandular swelling in her breast, formed the germ of a corrosive tumour, which slowly consumed her. Marshal Richelieu, while she was wasting away in the most cruel sufferings, sought elsewhere for amusement, but failed not, *en passant*, to pay her a few polite attentions; accordingly, after her death, every one said: Marshal Richelieu has really behaved admirably! He continued to visit her till the very last moment.

It was to be loved in this manner, that a woman, who, by a virtuous conduct, might, in her own house, have enjoyed the public esteem, and the pleasures of a happy and respected life, had sacrificed her repose, her virtue, her fortune, and every enjoyment. And what gives a still more dismal view of this frenzy of vanity, is, that neither her heart nor her senses were much concerned in it, However lively her imagination, Madame Poplinière was extremely cold; but she was ruined, like many others, by thinking that a duke, famed in the annals of

gallantry, would be a glorious conquest.

La Popliniere, having now got rid of his wife, thought only of enjoying his freedom and wealth. I then found his house at Passy, a most charming, but most dangerous abode. He had in his pay, the best concert of music which was then known. The instrumental performers were accommodated in his house, and arranged, with wonderful concert, the symphonies which they were to execute in the evening. The first actors, and particularly the opera girls, embellished his suppers. At these entertainments, our ears were first charmed by brilliant voices; after which, we were agreeably surprised, amid the sound of instruments, to see Lany, his sister, and the young Puvigné, leave the table, and, in the same hall, dance to the airs played by the band. Every able musician who came from Italy, violin players, and singers of both sexes, were freely lodged and boarded in his house;

and at these concerts every one studied to excel. Rameau composed his operas; and, on holidays, when mass was said in the private chapel, he played upon the organ little pieces, which shewed wonderful genius. Never did citizen live so like a prince,—and indeed princes themselves came to share his pleasures.

He had a private theatre, on which nothing was acted but dramas of his own composition, the performers being chosen out of his acquaintances. These dramas, though displaying no very high genius, were in a pretty good taste, and tolerably written, so that we could praise them without any excessive degree of flattery. Their success was the more secure, as the representation was followed by a splendid supper, to which were invited a select number of spectators, consisting of ambassadors from the European courts, the first nobility, and the handsomest women in Paris.

La Popliniere did the honours of his table, like a man who, by living in the

world, had acquired a just sense of propriety, and in whose air and manner there was nothing unbecoming. Even his pride was covered with a veil of politeness and modesty; and in the respect which he paid to the great, he still retained a kind of easy civility, which became him well, because it was natural. He was gallant and witty; and without much study or cultivation, had some talent for versification. Even those who came to enjoy his luxury and expence, failed not elsewhere to ridicule the splendid manner in which he lived; but, in his own house, he heard nothing but praise and congratulation; and every one, with more or less complaisance, paid in flattery the pleasures he enjoyed. He was, indeed, as was commonly said, a spoiled child of fortune; but though I, who saw him habitually and closely, was sometimes afflicted at seeing him a little too vain, yet I now wonder that he was not more so.

A failing much more deplorable than this pompous vanity, was a thirst, like that of Tantalus, for a kind of licentious pleasure, which he was now almost wholly incapable of enjoying. The financier of La Fontaine complained, that *sleep was not sold at market like meat and drink.* But it was not sleep only, which Popliniere would willingly have paid for at its weight in gold.

He was surrounded by every means of gratification; but while fortune brought these in crowds, nature, on the contrary, prescribed a mortifying abstinence; and he was tormented by this continual alternative of temptation and disappointment. The poor wretch could not be convinced that the cause lay in himself. He never failed to accuse the present object; and, whenever a new one appeared more attractive, we saw him gallant and gay, as if expanded by this pleasing ray of hope. Then, indeed, he was agreeable. He told diverting stories; sung songs of his own composing, in a style either free or

delicate, according to the object which inspired him. But the more lively and delighted he had been in the evening, the more, next day, was he sad and dissatisfied.

Meanwhile, I myself, surrounded by temptation, was far from being always able to resist it. I was perfectly sensible that indulgence hurt me, and that I ought to have shunned it by absence; but I had not fortitude sufficient. The corridor in which I lodged, was commonly filled with opera girls. With such neighbours, it was difficult to reserve a sufficient number of hours, either for sleep or study. The pleasures of the table tended also to cloud my intellectual faculties. I had never suspected temperance to be the nurse of genius, yet nothing can be more true. I awoke with my head confused, and my ideas oppressed by the vapours of a great supper. I was surprised that my spirits should not be so pure or so free as in the *rue des Mathurins* or in that *des Macons*. The reason

is plain; the operation of fancy must not be embarrassed by that of the other organs. The Muses are said to be chaste; it should have been added, that they are also temperate; but both of these maxims were wholly forgotten by me.

I had carelessly completed the tragedy of Cleopatra; the play which, as it now stands in the collection of my works, is finished the most carefully of any. Then, however, as I have elsewhere expressed myself, it bore evident marks of the precipitation with which a man writes, at an age when he has not yet experienced how difficult it is to write well. I had introduced upon the stage, the catastrophe with which history furnished me; and Vaucanson had been obliging enough to form the automaton of an asp, which, when Cleopatra pressed it to her bosom to call forth its bite, imitated, almost to the life, the motion of a living animal. But the surprise occasioned by this masterpiece of art, drew off the attention from the true interest of the scene. I

afterwards, therefore, preferred a more simple catastrophe. Indeed, I must acknowledge myself to have been too confident of my own powers, in hoping to procure forgiveness for so monstrous an error as that of Antony. The example it affords is terrible; but the great difficulty was to render it affecting.

Seeking for a more pathetic subject, I thought it might be found in the tragedy of the Heraclides. This subject bore some resemblance to the Iphigenia in Aulis; but the two were so different, both in character and incident, that the same Greek poet, Euripides, had treated both. Yet scarce had my play been accepted, and the rehearsal begun, than the report became current, that I had chosen a subject precisely similar to one of Racine, and was preparing to try my strength with that great poet.

This report, spread with the most marked and studied malevolence, shewed me that I had enemies, and even that they were numerous. At that time, I

inquired in vain for the cause, but I have since discovered it. At the theatre, the charming and treacherous Gaussin had alienated from me all her party, which was numerous; for it was composed, first of her own friends, and then of the enemies of Mademoiselle Clairon, who were joined by the zealous partizans of Mademoiselle Dumenil. The success of Clairon was always carrying away some character from one or other of these actresses; and I, her faithful poet, was also the object of their enmity. Among the amateurs and intriguers behind the scenes, I was opposed by all Voltaire's enemies, and besides by his enthusiastic admirers, who were much less generous than himself, and could not endure my success, however inferior to his. Many circles which I had been first admitted into, and had afterwards neglected, were displeased at my having received their advances so coolly. La Popliniere's friendship drew upon me the hatred of those who envied him. To these, add that crowd of people who are

naturally inclined to humble those who rise, and to enjoy the disgrace of those whom they have seen in prosperity; and you will easily conceive how I, who had never either done or wished evil to any one, should have had so many enemies. Among these were also some young men, who had heard my silly adventures talked of in the world, and supposing that, in point of gallantry, I had the same foolish pretensions with themselves, could not forgive this rivalship; which, by the way, proves that the ancient maxim, *conceal thy life*, can nowhere be better applied than to a man of letters, who ought to seek celebrity only by his writings.

But the most terrible of all my enemies was the coffee-house *de Procope*, the haunt of all the critics of the pit. I had at first frequented it, and had been rather a favourite. But, after the success of *Dionysius* and *Aristomenes*, I had been advised to give up going there, and had followed this imprudent advice. Such a sudden and abrupt retreat, being

ascribed to vanity, did me the greatest injury; and this tribunal became as hostile to me, as it had formerly been favourable. This, my children, may be a warning to you to be cautious in forming your youthful acquaintances; for, when you have once engaged, it is difficult to withdraw, without drawing upon yourselves bitter resentments Instead of gradually untying the knot, I broke it; in which I was very much to blame.

Lastly, the too great frankness, and perhaps bluntness of my character, never suffered me to conceal my utter aversion for those wretched journalists, who, as Voltaire used to say, daily attack our best compositions, praise our worst, and convert the noble profession of letters into a trade as vile and despicable as themselves. The moment my success began, they fell upon me like a swarm of wasps; from Freron to Aubert, there was not one of those despicable writers who did not take revenge for my contempt by violently abusing my works.

Such was the disposition of a part of the public when I brought out the tragedy of the *Heraclides*. Of all my plays, this was the most feebly written, but the most pathetic; and I cannot describe the impression made by it at the rehearsals. Mademoiselle Dumenil performed the part of Deianira; Mademoiselle Clairon that of Olimpia; and the expression of love and grief in the mother was so rending, that she, who represented the daughter, was unable to speak from emotion. The audience dissolved in tears. M. de la Popliniere, as well as all present, assured me of complete success.

I have elsewhere stated the event by which the whole effect of this pathos was destroyed at the first representation. But a circumstance, which could not be mentioned in a preface, may be clearly told in private memoirs. Mademoisello Dumenil was fond of wine. She used between the acts to drink a tumbler, but so diluted with water as not to intoxicate her. Unhappily, on this day, the servant,

without her knowledge, poured out pure wine. While yet warm with acting, she drank this wine, and it went to her head. In a state of stupid intoxication, she acted, or rather stammered the rest of her part, with so roving and senseless an air, that, instead of being pathetic, it became ludicrous; and, it is well known, that when the pit has once begun to laugh at what is serious, they are no longer affected by any thing, and seek only to divert themselves with frigid parody.

As the public did not know what had passed behind the scenes, they failed not to impute to the character the extravagance of the actress; and the report in Paris was, that my play was written in such a silly and ridiculous stile of familiarity, that it had thrown them all into bursts of laughter.

Though Mademoiselle Dumenil did not love me, yet, as she considered my disgrace as in a great measure owing to her, she thought herself bound to make every exertion in order to repair it. The

play was again presented, though much against my will; it was performed as well as possible by the two actresses; the few who saw it shed delicious tears; but the opposite prejudice, once established, could not be removed. It never rose; so that at the sixth representation I desired it to be discontinued.

My children will have read the account I have given elsewhere of the entertainment which awaited me at Passy, on the day of the first representation of the Heraclides. Being wholly unsuited to the event, would have humbled me in the greatest degree, had not my presence of mind enabled me to shun its ridiculous effect, by placing upon the head of Mademoiselle Clairon that crown which was so unseasonably offered to myself. I mention this circumstance only to shew the confidence with which Poplinicre had looked forward to the success of my work. He still adhered to his opinion, and redoubled his expressions of friendship, in order to recover me out of the

deep despair with which I was overwhelmed.

My mind, as it gradually rose, assumed a character somewhat more manly, and even a shade of philosophy, for which I was indebted to adversity, and perhaps also to some acquaintances I had formed. My enchantment at Passy was not such as to make me forget Paris; and, oftener than Popliniere could have wished, I took little excursions thither. At the house of my worthy friend, Madame Harenc, whom I never neglected; I became acquainted with D'Alembert and the young Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, who both accompanied Madame du Défant whenever she came to supper. Here I merely name these interesting characters, of whom I shall speak at large in the sequel.

Another circle into which I was introduced, (I forget how), was that of the Baron de Holbach. There it was that I became acquainted with Diderot, Helvetius, Grimm, and J. J. Rousseau, before

he commenced savage. Grimm was then secretary and intimate friend of the young Count de Frise, Marshal Saxe's nephew. He gave us, weekly, a bachelor's dinner, where ease and frankness prevailed; but this was a food of which Rousseau partook very sparingly. No one ever observed more faithfully than he, the gloomy maxim *of living with his friends as if they were one day to be his enemies.* When I knew him, he had just gained the prize of eloquence of the academy at Dijon, by that fine sophism which imputes to the arts and sciences the natural effects of the prosperity and luxury of nations. Yet his character had not assumed the same colour which it afterwards did; nor did he discover the same ambition of becoming the founder of a sect. Either his pride was not sprung up, or it concealed itself under a timid politeness, which sometimes was even so obsequious as to border on humility. But through his fearful reserve, distrust was visible; his lowering eyes watched every thing

with a look full of gloomy suspicion. He seldom entered into conversation, and never opened himself to us. Yet the reception he met with was not the less friendly; being known to be governed by a restless and easily wounded self-love, he was treated with the same watchful and delicate attention, which a man would use towards a handsome, but very vain and capricious woman, whom he wished to please. He was then employed upon the music of the *Devin du Village*, and sung to us, with his own accompaniment on the harpsichord, the airs he had composed. We were charmed with them; and not less with the firm, animated, and profound manner in which the first specimen of his eloquence had been written. Nothing, I may truly say, could be more sincere than our affection for his person, and our esteem for his talents. It is the recollection of this time which has made me so indignant at seeing him, for mere trifles, or for wrongs which lay all on his own side, calumniating persons who be-

haved so well to him, and sought only his friendship. I have lived with them during their whole life. I shall soon have occasion to speak of their mind and soul. Never did I see in them any thing like the character which he has malignantly imputed to them.

With respect to myself, the short time we were together in this society passed between us coldly, without either affection or aversion; the manner in which we behaved to each other gave no ground either for complaint or praise; and in what I have said, or may say of him, I feel myself perfectly free from every personal feeling.

But there was one advantage which I derived from his intercourse and example; it made me reflect on the imprudence of my youth. 'Here,' said I, 'is a man who has taken time to think before he wrote; while I, in the most difficult and dangerous of all arts, have hastily published almost without thinking at all. Twenty years spent in retired study and medita-

tion, have enlarged and ripened his knowledge, while I scatter my ideas when they are scarcely unfolded, and have not nearly attained to their full strength and growth. In his first productions, accordingly, we may see an astonishing fulness, a perfect manhood; while mine are marked by the greenness and feebleness of powers not sufficiently nourished by study and reflection. My only excuse lay in the unfortunate necessity of composing incessantly and hastily, in order to procure my subsistence. I resolved to extricate myself from this melancholy situation, even though I should thereby be obliged to renounce literature.

I had some interest at court; nor had the disgrace of M. Orri deprived me of all hope of making my fortune. The same woman, who had caused his dismissal, was pleased with my having more than once echoed the public voice in verses which celebrated whatever was worthy of praise in the reign of her lover. I had composed a little poem up-

on the establishment of the military school, a monument raised to the glory of the king by the *Pâris*, bosom friends of Madame du Pompadour; and this poem had interested her, and brought me into favour with her. The abbé de Bernis and Duclos * called upon her every Sunday; and as they had both some kindness for me, I made one in their parties. This woman, at whose toilet the first grandees in the kingdom, and even the princes of the blood paid their court, was a plain citizen's daughter, who had been so weak as to be desirous of pleasing the king, and so unfortunate as to succeed. In this elevated condition, she was the best creature in the world. She received us all three in a familiar manner, though with very sensible shades of distinction. To one she said, briskly, and with an air of levity, '*How do you do, Duclos?*' to the other, in a more friendly tone and manner, '*How do you do, Abbé?*' while to me, she said, in a lower

* See note (7) at the end.

voice, and more seriously, ‘ *How are you, Marmontel?*’ The ambition of Duclos was to become a person of consequence in his native province of Brittany; that of the abbé de Bernis, was to have a small apartment at the top of the Thulleries, with a pension of fifty pounds on the privy purse; while mine was to be employed usefully to myself and to the public, without depending on its caprice: I asked only for constant and peaceful employment. ‘ I am sensible,’ said I to Madame du Pompadour, ‘ that my poetical talents are but moderate; but I think myself possessed of sufficient capacity to fill a place in a public office, and I am capable of any degree of application which it may require. Just get me put upon trial, Madame; I dare assure you that I shall give satisfaction.’ She answered that I was designed by nature to be a man of letters; that my disgust at poetry was only want of courage; that, instead of throwing up the game, I should endeavour, as Voltaire had often done, to regain what

I had lost, and to rise from my fall, like him, by a new success.

Out of complaisance to her, I agreed to employ myself on a new subject. But the one I chose was too simple, and too much above my powers. All the subjects which history afforded, appeared to me exhausted; all the great interests of the human heart, the violent passions, the tragic situations, in a word, all the great springs of terror and pity seemed to have been previously occupied by the great masters. I rummaged my head for a the story which might be new, and out of common road. I thought I had found it in a subject wholly imaginary, with which I was at first delighted. It presented an exhibition of awful majesty, *(the funeral of Semiramis)*; it gave me great characters to paint, in a variety of situations; and an intrigue so extremely complicated, that the issue could not possibly be foreseen. This was what blinded me to the difficulties of a story, which was wholly moral and political, and which could not

be supported with warmth during five acts, without all the resources of poetical eloquence. I exerted myself to the utmost; and my friends, either through mistake or excessive indulgence, persuaded me that I had succeeded. Madame de Pompadour often inquired how I came on with my new play; when it was finished, she wished to read it, and made some pretty just objections to particular passages; but, on the whole, she was pleased with it.

Here I recollect a circumstance, which may enliven a little the story of my misfortune. While the manuscript of my play was still in the hands of Madame de Pompadour, I appeared one Sunday at her toilet, in that hall which was crowded with courtiers, newly come from the king's levée. She was encircled by them; and whether there was any whom she disliked to see, or whether she was tired of having so many people about her, she said, immediately on seeing me, 'I have something to say to you;' then leaving

her toilet, she went into her closet, whither I followed. It was merely to return my manuscript, with her notes penciled on it. She was five or six minutes pointing out the places marked, and explaining her criticisms. Meanwhile the whole circle of courtiers stood round the toilet waiting for her. She again entered the room; while I, concealing the manuscript, went modestly to resume my place. I strongly suspected that so singular an incident would produce its effect; but the universal impression which it made went far beyond my idea. Every eye was fixed on me; slight, little salutations, sweet smiles of friendship were addressed to me from all sides; and before leaving the hall, I was invited to dinner for at least the whole week. What do I say? A nobleman, a man with a ribbon at his breast, whom I had sometimes dined with at M. de la Popliniere's, the M. D. S. happening to stand by my side, took hold of my hand, and whispered, 'Wont you speak to your old friends?' Amazed at

his meanness, I bowed, and said to myself—ah! what a thing then is favour, since its very shadow confers such singular importance.

On reading my play to the actors, they, like Madame de Pompadour, were charmed by the moral beauty with which I had adorned the concluding acts. But on the stage, their weakness was evident, and was felt in proportion to the vehemence and warmth of those which preceded. There was nothing tragic in mere contests of generosity and virtue. The public, grew weary of the absence of violent emotion, and my play sunk. Here I was sensible that the public were in the right.

I returned home, determined never more to write for the stage; and I immediately wrote by express to Madame de Pompadour, who was at Bellevue, telling her of my disaster, and earnestly repeating my entreaty, that she would get me employed more usefully than in an art, for which nature had never intended me.

She was at table with the king when she received my letter; and having obtained permission to read it, ' Sire,' said she, ' the new play has failed; and do you know who it is that tells me so? The author himself. Poor young man! I wish I could relieve him just now by the offer of some employment.' Her brother, the Marquis de Marigny, who was at supper, said that, if she chose, he could give me a place of secretary for buildings. ' Ah,' said she, ' I beseech you, write to him to-morrow;' and the king appeared satisfied that I should receive this consolation.

In this letter, M. de Marigny, in the most agreeable and obliging manner, offered me a place, which, he said, was not very lucrative, but tranquil, and such as would leave me leisure to devote to the Muses. My answer was expressive of the emotion of joy and gratitude with which I was animated. I felt like one who had reached a harbour after shipwreck, and I embraced the hospitable land which secured me a pleasing repose.

M. de la Popliniere learned, not without some chagrin, that I was about to separate from him. He complained, and repeated what he had often said, that I need not be anxious about the future, for that he intended to provide for me. I answered, that when I renounced the profession of a man of letters, my intention had not been to live idle and useless; but that I did not feel the less gratitude for his kindness. Indeed I should be ungrateful, after mentioning the part which he undesignedly took in the mischief I did myself, were I not to add, that the time we spent together, is in many other respects dear to my recollection; both from the sentiments of esteem and confidence which he himself expressed for me, and from the good will with which he inspired all those who would listen to him while discoursing on the goodness of my heart; for it was this that he particularly extolled in me.

At his house, men of very different characters and capacity followed like a

moving picture. I frequently met the ambassadors from the different courts of Europe, and derived a great deal of information from them. There it was that I became acquainted with the Count de Kaunitz, then ambassador from the court of Vienna, and since the most celebrated statesman in Europe. He had conceived a friendship for me; I went very often to dine with him at the Bourbon palace, and he talked of Paris and Versailles like a man who observed them well. Yet I must confess that the circumstance in his character, which struck me most, was a vain and effeminate delicacy. I believed him more occupied with his health, his appearance, and particularly with his complexion, and the dressing of his hair, than with the interests of his court. I one day surprised him on his return from a hunting party, with the yolk of an egg spread over his face, to prevent its being sunburnt; and I learnt long after from his cousin the Count de Par, a plain unaffected man, that during the whole pe-

riod of that long and glorious administration, during which he formed the soul of the cabinet of Vienna, he retained the same character of luxury, of effeminacy, and of minute attention to his dress and person, which he had when I knew him. Of all the men whom I have seen in the world, he is the one with respect to whom I have been most grossly mistaken. Yet I remember some of his conversations, which might have given me a different view of his turn of mind.

He one day said to me, 'How am I talked of in the fashionable circles?'—'Why, Sir, people say that your Excellency does not come up to the splendid idea they had formed on your arrival at Paris. Your mission from the first court in Europe, your large fortune, the palace you inhabit, and the dazzling pomp with which you entered, promised greater luxury and splendour in your houshold and manner of living. They expected a sumptuous table, frequent entertainments, balls particularly, balls, Sir, in your magnificent

drawing rooms. But of all this they see nothing; you live like a private man, with the wives of financiers, and neglect the people of highest fashion, both at court and city.'—'My dear Marmontel,' said he, 'I have just two things to attend to here: first, the affairs of my sovereign, which I do well; and then my pleasures, with regard to which I have only myself to consult. Acting a part would be a tiresome constraint, and therefore I avoid it. There is not an intriguing woman at Versailles who is worth the trouble of gaining. What should I do with these women? Sit down to their *tri*, or their dismal *cavagnole?* I have only two persons to court, the king and his mistress; and I am on a good footing with both.' This was not the discourse of a superficial and frivolous man.

After all, his little dinners were very good; Merci, Staremberg, Seckendorf, who were all three his official attendants, or rather his pupils, treated me in a very

friendly manner, and a flask of tokay enlivened the close of the repast.

A character very different from the Count de Kaunitz, both more affectionate and more amiable, was Lord Albemarle, the English ambassador, whose death was as much lamented at Paris as in his own country. He was the perfection of what one would call a gentleman and a man of honour; noble, feeling, and generous; and, at the same time, loyal, frank, polite, and friendly; he united whatever is best and most valuable, both in the French and English character. He had a mistress, an accomplished girl, whom envy never reproached with any other fault than that of having yielded to him. I made her my friend, which was a sure method of becoming also the friend of Lord Albemarle. The name of this amiable person was Mademoiselle Gaucher; but he gave her the childish and tender appellation of Lolote. She it was, to whom her lover said one evening, as she was earnestly viewing a star, '*Do*

not look so much at it, my dear, I cannot give it you.' Never did love express itself with more delicacy. His lordship's passion honoured its object with the highest esteem, the tenderest respect; nor was he the only person who viewed her with these sentiments. She was always faithful to the only man who had been able to please her; in her, therefore, the most excusable of errors into which innocence is drawn by extreme youth, had assumed a dignified and respectable character, which vice never had before. Her love possessed fidelity, delicacy, and disinterestedness; in short, it would have been completely virtuous, had it only been lawful. These two lovers would have been the most perfect model of a married couple.

The character of Mademoiselle Gaucher, was unaffectedly expressed in her whole person. Her beauty had something romantic, which, till then, one had seen only in idea. Her figure united the majesty of the cedar, with the pliancy of

the poplar; she walked with a languid and indolent air; but her carriage, though careless, was full of unaffected grace and propriety. Her image was present to my thoughts while I drew the shepherdess of the Alps. A lively imagination, with a cool judgment, gave her mind very much the same character as that of Montaigne. He was her favourite author, whom she habitually read; her language was imbued with his native and easy flow, and often with his energetic and happy turn of expression.

I was as much charmed with her as it is possible to be with a woman, without being in love with her. Next to the conversation of Voltaire, hers was the most delightful to me. We became intimate friends from the time that we knew each other.

She lost Lord Albemarle: he had, I believe, secured her an annuity of two thousand crowns * a year; in which her whole fortune consisted. The

* £250

grief she felt was profound, yet she behaved with firmness; and, by sharing her distress, I assisted her to bear it with decency. All Lord Albemarle's friends were hers; and they all continued faithful to her. Her society consisted of the Duke de Biron, the Marquis de Castries, and some others of the same class. Too happy, had she not, by a kind of fatality, been thrown out of so agreeable a situation, with which she herself was satisfied, into a rank of life different from her own.

Her health had been impaired; her friends grew anxious, and advised her to try the waters of Barege. In going and coming, she passed through Montauban, where she was treated with particular attention by the Count de Herouville, governor of that fortress. When she arrived at Paris, she received from him a letter nearly in these words: 'I, and all my domestics, are poisoned. Come Madam, do come to my aid, and bring a physician, for I place confidence in you

alone.' She set out in a post chaise, with an able physician, and M. de Herouville was saved. She had already inspired him with that enthusiasm, which, in lively old men, bears much resemblance to love. This was greatly increased by the service she had done him, and the appearance she had made at the head of his family. She had restored order and tranquillity to his house; health to himself and his servants, whose bowels had been torn by verdigrise; and, acting in concert with Dr. Malouet, had, on her side, performed the office of a moral physician. He was transported with admiration at the view of such zeal and courage; and, as soon as he was out of danger, could express his gratitude only by saying to her, as Medoro to Angelica;

Vous servir est ma seule envie,
J'en fais mon espoir le plus doux;
Vous m'avez conservé la vie,
*Je ne la cheris que pour vous.**

* To serve you is my sole desire, I look to it as my sweetest hope; you have preserved my life; on your account alone I value it.

She was wise enough, at first, to resist his urgency; but she was so weak at last as to consent, on condition, however, that their marriage should be secret, which it was for some time; but she became a mother, and it was necessary to acknowledge it.

The only wise conduct for both, (and it was the advice I gave to my fair friend), would then have been to confine themselves to a society of men of their own choice; to render it agreeable to women, and if possible attract them into it; but if not, to do without their society, and not seem to think of it. Madame de Herouville was perfectly sensible that this was the only proper line of conduct for her. But her husband, eager to introduce her into the world, attempted to do violence to public opinion. Wretched imprudence! He ought to have known, that to this opinion, the most important interest of married women was attached. Already too indignant at seeing girls carry off their husbands and lovers, they

were fully determined never to allow them to usurp also their rank, and to enjoy it amid themselves. He hoped that his wife's excellent character, her singular merit, that decency and propriety which she had preserved even in her misconduct, might have cast a veil over it. He was cruelly undeceived in his foolish error. She suffered mortifications, and died of grief.

In the house of M. de la Popliniere, I became also acquainted with the family of Chalut, whom I shall have occasion more than once to mention with praise in these memoirs, and whom I have seen die away gradually before my eyes.

Lastly, the country house of Madame de Tencin* being in the neighbourhood of that where I lived, gave me the advantage of some private interviews with that extraordinary woman. I had declined the honour of being admitted to her literary dinners: but when she came to this place

* See note (5) at the end.

for the sake of retirement, I used to spend with her the time when she was alone, and I cannot express how much I was deceived by her easy and careless air. Madame de Tencin, the woman, who, of all others in the kingdom, moved the greatest number of political springs, both in court and city, appeared to me only an indolent old woman. 'You do not like,' said she, 'these meetings of wits; you are timid in their presence. Well, come and chat with me in my solitude; you will be more at ease; and your character will suit better with my dull common sense.' She made me tell my history from childhood; entered into all my interests, shared all my troubles, and seemed to be occupied with nothing but my concerns. Ah! what acuteness, versatility, and activity of mind, were concealed from me, under this negligent air, this appearance of leisure and tranquillity. I laugh still at the simplicity with which, at leaving her, I used to

exclaim, *honest woman.* Yet her conversation, without my perceiving it, gave me a sounder and deeper knowledge of the world. For instance, I recollect two pieces of advice she gave me; one was to secure a livelihood, independent of literary success, and to throw only the surplus of my time into this lottery. 'Woe to him,' said she, 'who depends wholly on his pen! Nothing can be more precarious. The man who makes a pair of shoes is certain of being paid; but he who writes a book or a tragedy, is certain of nothing.' Another advice was, to attach myself rather to female than to male friends. 'For, by means of women,' said she, 'you may do any thing you please with men; and, besides, of the latter, some are too dissipated, and others too much taken up with their private interest, to pay any attention to yours; whereas, women think of these things were it only from having nothing else to do. Talk this evening to your female

friend, of some affair which concerns you; next day, as she works at her wheel or her tapestry, she will busy her brain in contriving some means of serving you. But when you think a woman can be useful to you, beware of being any thing more than her friend; for, if you be her lover, then as soon as a coolness, a quarrel ensues, all is over. Behave to her then with attention, with complaisance, nay, if you will, with gallantry, but proceed no further; you understand me.' Thus, in all our conversations, the ease of her manner so completely deceived me, that I never took her talents for any thing more than plain good sense.

I formed an acquaintance of the same date, but of a different kind, with Cury and his companions, the intendants of the *Menus Plaisirs*. You will see afterwards how dear it cost me; but, at present, I shall only mention how it came about. Quinault was one of my most favourite poets. I felt the harmony of

his beautiful lines; I was charmed with the elegant facility of his style, and never read the fine scenes of Proserpine, of Theseus, and of Armida, without being seized with a desire of composing an opera, and even with some hope of writing like him. This was only a vain and youthful presumption; yet was it honourable to the poet who inspired it; for one of the characters of a truly fine style, as Horace observes, is to be apparently easy to imitate, but in fact inimitable:

Ut sibi quivis
Speret idem, sudet multum, frustra que laboret
Ausus idem.

Besides I lived in the house with Rameau; I saw him employed upon bad poems, and could have wished to have given him better.

Such was my disposition when, at the birth of the duke of Burgundy, Bernage, provost of the merchants, came and proposed that I should unite my labours with those of Rameau, in composing, on occasion of this happy event, an opera, which

might admit of very splendid scenery. It was necessary that both the words and the music of this work should be hastily completed by a fixed day.

You may well suppose that neither of us were long of beginning to our task: Nevertheless, as *Acanthe et Cephise* contained a great deal of show and machinery, it was supported by the beauty of the decorations, by some fine effects of harmony, and perhaps also by some interesting situations. It ran, I believe, through fourteen nights, which was a great deal for a work done at command.

I executed, somewhat better, two detached acts, which Rameau chose also to put into music, *la Guirlande* and *les Sybarites*. They both met with success. In our concerts, however, I heard other pieces, in comparison with the melody of which, the French music appeared to me heavy and monotonous. My ear and soul were charmed and transported by the airs, duos, and measured recitative of which the Italians formed their lyric scene. I studied their forms;

I endeavoured to accommodate our language to them, and could have wished Rameau to join with me in transporting their beauties upon our theatre. But Rameau, now an old man, was unwilling to change his manner; he would see nothing but faults and abuse in that of the Italians, and pretended to despise it. The finest air of Leo, of Vinci, of Pergolese, or of Jommelli, made him run away with anger. It was not, till long after, that I found composers capable of understanding and seconding me. From that time, however, I was known among the amateurs of the opera; at the head of whom, both in singing, in dancing, and also in voluptuousness, the intendants *des Menus Plaisirs*, * were distinguished behind the scenes. I was drawn into their society by that pleasing and natural inclination, which disposes us to enjoy life; and their intercourse was the more attractive, as it

* Persons under whose direction public shows, and other amusements of the court, were carried on. Their office somewhat resembled that anciently held in England by the *Master of the Revels*.

presented, in the very bosom of pleasure, characters of amusing originality, and sallies of wit in the very best taste and manner. Cary, chief of the joyous band, was a man of wit, and extremely diverting; he excelled in a grave irony, but was more facetious than ill natured. The Epicurean Tribon had first been a disciple, and one of the most favourite pupils of father Porée, and afterwards became a performer at the opera. Having yielded the scene to Geliote, he was now living free and content with little, and his old age was rendered delightful by an anacreontic humour which never forsook him. I never saw any one so gaily take leave of the pleasures of youth, let himself be smoothly carried along by the current of years, and even in their decline, preserve that green, gay, and open-hearted philosophy, which Montaigne himself would allow only to youth. A character of another stamp, and equally amiable in his way, was Geliote; sweet, smiling, *amistoux*, to use a word of his own province, which paints him in na-

tive colours; the serenity of happiness sat on his forehead, and he breathed it into others. Indeed, were I asked to name the most completely happy man whom I ever saw, I should answer, Geliote. His birth was obscure, and in his youth he had been a singing boy to a church at Tolouse, but he suddenly appeared upon the opera, and met with the most brilliant success; he had been from that time, and still was, the idol of the public. When he appeared on the stage, the audience leapt for joy; they listened in an ecstacy of pleasure; at the end of every song, they broke out into applauses. His voice was the most extraordinary ever heard, at once for capacity and fulness of sound, and for the piercing brilliancy of its silver tones. Neither his face nor his figure was handsome; but his singing was sufficient to embellish him; the eyes, as well as the ears, seemed then to be charmed. The young women had their heads turned with him; they were seen thrusting themselves half out of their

boxes, and their excessive emotion became itself a spectacle; nay, more than one of the handsomest, were pleased to express it to him. He was so good a musician, that his art gave him no trouble; and he experienced none of the unpleasant circumstances usually attached to his profession. He was loved and respected by his companions, with whom he was on a polite and friendly, but not familiar footing; and he lived like a man of the world, whose company was universally sought after. People at first wished only to hear him sing; and were as much delighted with his readiness in gratifying them, as with the fineness of his voice. He had studiously selected and made himself master of our prettiest songs, and sung them to his guitar with exquiste taste. But men soon forgot the singer, and only enjoyed the agreeable man; his wit and character gained him as many friends as he had admirers. These were equally among the class of citizens, and in the most fashionable circles; bein

every where mild, plain, and modest, he was never out of place. By the practice of his art, and by favours which were bestowed on him, he had acquired a handsome little fortune; his first use of which, was to make his family comfortable. He possessed very considerable interest in the offices and cabinets of ministers, for it was the interest which pleasure bestows; and he employed it in rendering essential services to his native province. There, accordingly, he was adored. He was allowed to pay it a visit every summer; and his route from Paris to Pau being known, the time of his passing through every city was fixed; entertainments every where awaited him; and here I must mention some particulars which I learned before leaving Toulouse. He had two friends in that city to whom none were ever preferred; one was the tailor with whom he had lodged, and the other his music-master when he was a singing boy. The nobility and members of parliament disputed who

should have Geliote at his second supper; but as to the first, it was well known to be invariably reserved for these two friends. He was a favourite of the fair, as much, and more than he could have wished; yet he was celebrated for discretion, and none of his numerous conquests were known, with the exception of such as chose to declare themselves. Lastly, amid so much prosperity, envy was never roused against him; nor did I ever hear that Geliote had an enemy.

The rest of this society were merely lovers of mirth; and among these, I may be said to have held a pretty distinguished corner.

Now, after the joyous dinners I had made with these gentlemen, just imagine you see me passing over to the philosophic school, and at the opera buffa, newly arrived from Italy, mixing with the Diderots, the d'Alemberts, the Buffons, the Turgots, the d'Holbachs, the Helvetius, the Rousseaus, all burning with zeal for Italian music, and eager to raise the

immense edifice of the Encyclopædia, whose foundations they were laying. You will then say of me in miniature, what Horace said of Aristippus, *Omnis Aristippum decuit color, et status et res.* Yes, I own it; pleasure, study, the table, philosophy, were all welcome. I relished wisdom with the wise; but with fools, I willingly gave myself up to folly. My character was yet fluctuating, various and discordant. I adored virtue, yet I yielded to the example and allurement of vice. I was satisfied, I was happy, taking a frugal dinner with d'Alembert in his little room at the honest glazier's. Then, after having been busied all the morning in his high geometry, he would converse to me with taste and understanding, on subjects of literature; or, on moral subjects, would unite the wisdom of a mature understanding, with the gaiety of a free and youthful heart, traverse the world with the eye of a Democritus, and raise a laugh at the expence of pride and folly. I was happy, also, though in a

lighter and more fugitive manner, when, amid a flight of gay and sportive creatures, escaped from behind the scenes, I sat at table among our amateurs, surrounded by the nymphs and graces, and sometimes too by the votaries of Bacchus, and heard nothing but the praises of love and wine. I left all to go to Versailles. But, before separating from those who had taken the lead in the enterprize of the Encyclopædia, I engaged to contribute to the literary department, and the praises they gave my performances encouraged me to do more than either I or they hoped or expected.

Voltaire was then absent from Paris; he was in Prussia. The thread of my story has for some time prevented my mentioning him; but till his departure, our intimacy continued the same; and the afflictions he underwent seemed only to draw closer the ties of our union. Of these afflictions, the keenest for the time, was that occasioned by the death of the Marchioness Duchatelet. However,

to conceal nothing, I observed on this occasion, as on many others, the changeable nature of his feelings. When I went to condole with him on his affliction: 'Come,' said he, 'my friend, come and share my grief. I have lost my illustrious friend; I am in despair; nothing can comfort me.' Now often had I heard him compare her to a fury that haunted his steps; and I knew, that more than once, in their quarrels, they had drawn knives against each other;' however, I let him weep on, and seemed to sympathize with him. Only, with the view of deriving from the very cause of this death, some ground of consolation, I asked what she died of. 'What,' said he, 'do you not know? Ah! my friend, she has been killed by that brute; she had a child by him.' And then he goes on with his panegyric on this incomparable woman, and redoubles his tears and his sobs. Presently after arrives Chauvelin, the intendant, who tells him some story or other, that was divert-

ing enough, upon which Voltaire falls into bursts of laughter. I laughed too, as I went away, at this great man, who, in every passion which agitated him, passed rapidly, like a child, from one extreme to another. One alone was fixed, and, as it were, inherent in his soul; this was ambition and the love of glory; and nothing which could nourish or flatter this passion, was viewed by him with indifference.

He did not think it enough to be the most illustrious among men of letters, he wished also to be distinguished at court. From his earliest youth, he had been flattered by a habitual intercourse with the great. He had associated, first with Marshal Villars, and the grand prior de Vendome; then with the duke de Richelieu, the duke de la Valliere, the Boufflers, the Montmorency. He supped constantly with them, and wrote and talked to them with his well known respectful familiarity. Verses which contained a light and delicate flattery, with the charms

of a conversation no less seducing than his poetry, made him be liked and feasted among these noblemen. Now they were admitted to royal suppers; and why then should not he? This was one of his most eager desires. He recollected the reception which Lewis le Grand had given to Boileau and Racine. 'Horace and Virgil,' said he, 'had the honour of approaching the person of Augustus; the Æneid had been read in the cabinet of Livia. Were Addison and Prior greater men than he? Yet in their country they had been honourably employed, one as minister, and the other as ambassador.' The place of historiographer was already a mark of confidence which he had received; and when had it ever been so splendidly filled? He had purchased the office of gentleman in ordinary to the king's bed-chamber. To this office very little duty was commonly attached; yet it gave him a right to be sent to foreign courts upon slight commissions; and he hoped that, in the case of a man like

him, these commissions would not be confined to barren compliments of congratulation and condolence. He was ambitious, in short, to make his way at court; and when he had once taken any scheme into his head, he stuck to it obstinately. He used to quote these words of Scripture: *Regnum cœlorum vim patitur et violenti rapiunt illud.* He employed therefore every imaginable method of bringing himself under the king's notice.

When Madame d'Etioles, afterwards marchioness of Pompadour, was publicly announced as the royal mistress, and even before that period, he made haste to pay court to her. He easily succeeded in pleasing her; and while he celebrated the victories of the king, he at the same time flattered his mistress by writing pretty verses for her. He doubted not that, through her means, he should obtain the favour of being admitted to the little cabinet suppers; and I am convinced that such would have been her wish,

This lady, finding herself suddenly transplanted to court, and knowing as yet very imperfectly the character and inclinations of the king, had at first hoped to amuse him by her talents. She had a private theatre, and performed in his presence little operas, some of which were composed expressly for her; and in these, her action, her voice, and her singing, were justly applauded. Voltaire, having got into favour with her, thought of undertaking the direction of this exhibition. The gentlemen of the bed-chamber, and the intendants *des menus plaisirs*, took the alarm at this encroachment upon their rights. A league was formed between them to remove a man, who would have supplanted them all, had he made himself as agreeable to the king as to his mistress. But he was well known to be no favourite of that monarch, whose prejudice against him was increased by the eagerness with which he pushed himself forward. Little affected by the praises bestowed in his panegyric, he

viewed him only as an impious philosopher, and an ambitious flatterer. With great difficulty he had at length consented to his being received into the French academy. Without reckoning the friends of religion, who were no friends to Voltaire, the king was surrounded by men who were jealous of the favour which they saw him courting, and studiously censured every thing he did with the view of pleasing. According to them, the poem of Fontenoy was only a frigid gazette; the panegyric on the king was inanimate, devoid of colouring and eloquence. The lines to Madame de Pompadour were censured as indecent and indiscreet; and with regard to the following in particular;

Soyez tous deux sans ennemis,
*Et gardez tous deux vos conquetes.**

they made the king remark how disrespectful it was to place him on a level with his mistress.

* Be both without enemies, and both retain your conquests.

At the marriage of the dauphin with the infanta of Spain, it was easy to expose the ridiculous impropriety of endeavouring to entertain the infanta with the Princess of Navarre, a drama, which really was not calculated to succeed. The same cannot be said of the opera called the *Temple of Glory*; the idea was great, the subject well conceived, and suitably executed. The third act, where Trajan was the hero, contained an illusion with which the king was likely to be flattered; this hero, to whom the temple of glory was opened, was just, generous, and humane; a friend to peace, and worthy of the love of the world. Voltaire never doubted that the king would, in this panegyric, recognize himself. After the play, he met him, and seeing his majesty pass without speaking, he took the liberty of asking, *Is Trajan satisfied?* Trajan, surprized and displeased that any one should have the boldness to interrogate him, answered by a cold silence; and the

whole court thought Voltaire wrong in having dared to question the king.

The only thing now necessary for his removal, was to alienate the mistress; and the scheme they fell upon for this purpose, was to set up Crebillon in opposition to him.

Crebillon, old and poor, was living with his dogs in the lowest part of the Marais, labouring, at broken intervals, upon that Catilina which he had announced ten years ago, and of which he now and then read fragments of scenes, which were thought admirable. Age, former success, manners somewhat savage, a soldier-like character, an aspect truly tragic, the commanding, though simple, tone, in which he recited his rough and harsh lines, together with the energetic vigour of his expressions; all concurred in striking mens' minds with a kind of enthusiasm. I have heard persons, who were no fools, applaud with transport the following lines, which he had put in the mouth of Cicero;

Catilina, je crois que tu n'es point coupable ;
Mais si tu les, tu n'es qu'un homme detestable ;
Et je ne vois en toi, que l'esprit et l'eclat
*Du plus grand des mortels, et du plus scelerat.**

The name of Crebillon was the point round which the enemies of Voltaire rallied. *Electre* and *Rhadamiste*, which were still occasionally performed, drew but small audiences; all Crebillon's other tragedies were forgotten, while Voltaire's *Oedipe*, *Alzire*, *Mahomet*, *Zaire*, *Merope*, appeared on the stage in all the splendour of full success. Old Crebillon's party was small, but they were loud, and never ceased to call him the Sophocles of the age; nay, even some men of letters, Marivaux, in particular, used to say, that all the fine talents of Voltaire must bow before the genius of Crebillon.

Madame de Pompadour was told of this great man being abandoned and allowed to grow old without succour, because he had no turn for intrigue. This

* Catiline, I believe you not to be guilty; but if you are, you are only a detestable man; and I see you distinguished, as being either the greatest or the most criminal of human beings.

was touching her in the tenderest part. ‘What do you say?’ cried she, ‘Crebillon poor, and abandoned!’ She immediately obtained for him from the king a pension of an hundred louis on the privy purse.

Crebillon hastened to thank his benefactress. She was confined to bed with a slight indisposition, when he was announced; she desired him to be admitted. Affected by the sight of this fine old man, she gave him a very gracious reception. He was affected by it, and was leaning on the bed to kiss her hand, when the king came in: ‘Ah, madam,’ cried Crebillon, ‘the king has surprized us; I am undone.’ The king was pleased with this sally from an old man of eighty. Crebillon's success was decided. All the *menus plaisirs* exhausted themselves in praises of his genius and character. He had dignity, they said, but no pride, and still less vain glory. His poverty was a clear proof of his disinterestedness. He was quite a character of the old stamp, and a man whose genius did honour to

the present reign. *Catilina* was talked of as the wonder of the age. Madame de Pompadour wished to hear it; and a day was appointed for the reading; the king was listening, present, though invisible. It was completely successful; and when Catilina was first represented, Madame de Pompadour, with a flight of courtiers, attended, and shewed the liveliest interest in its success. Shortly after, Crebillon obtained the favour of having an edition of his works printed at the Louvre, at the expence of the treasury. From that time, Voltaire was coldly received, and gave up going to court.

You know the correspondence he had carried on with the prince royal of Prussia. That prince, on becoming king, expressed the same affection for him; and the infinitely flattering manner in which Voltaire answered, had perhaps secretly tended to alienate from him the mind of Louis XV. The king of Prussia, therefore, from the time he came to the throne, had never ceased inviting Voltaire by letter to come and pay him a

visit; and the favour which Crebillon enjoyed at court, having stung him to the quick, he determined to go. But, before setting out, he endeavoured to take revenge for this vexation, in a manner truly worthy of a great man. He attacked his adversary in close combat, and tried his strength with him on the different subjects he had treated, without shunning any except *Rhadamiste*, *Atrée*, and *Pyrrhus*; the one, doubtless, out of respect; the other, out of horror; and the third, out of disdain, for such a disagreeable and fantastical subject.

He began with Semiramis: and the grand and tragical manner in which the plot was conceived; the gloomy, tempestuous, and terrible colouring, which he threw over it; the magic of his numbers, the religious and formidable majesty which filled it, the melting situations and scenes which he introduced; and, lastly, the art with which the marvellous part was prepared and supported, were well fitted to annihilate the feeble and frigid

Semiramis of Crebillon. But the theatre was not then suited for a plot of this description. The stage was confined by a crowd of spectators; some seated on benches raised one above another, others standing at the bottom of the theatre, and even behind; so that the distracted Semiramis, with the shade of Ninus issuing from his tomb, were obliged to pass through a thick row of *petit maitres*. This aukward circumstance threw ridicule upon the seriousness of the theatrical action. Without illusion, there can be no interest, and without probability no illusion; so that this play, which, in point of genius, is Voltaire's masterpiece, experienced, at its first representation, a want of success, which almost amounted to failure. Voltaire shuddered with grief; but he was not discouraged. Following the steps of Sophocles, he composed Arestes, where he rose above Sophocles himself in the character of Electra, and in the art of softening the indecency and harshness of that of Clytemnestra. But,

at the moment of the catastrophe, in the fifth act, he had not yet sufficiently weakened the horror of the parricide, and the friends of Crebillon being no way disposed to befriend him, every thing which criticism could lay hold of was either murmured at, or turned into derision. Thus the performance was every instant interrupted; so that this play, which has since been so justly applauded, was then hissed. I was in the amphitheatre, more dead than alive. Voltaire came, and, at an instant, when the pit were turning a pathetic stroke into ridicule, he got up, and exclaimed, '*Oh! you barbarians! they are the words of Sophocles.*'

Lastly, he gave *Rome Sauvée;* where, in the characters of Cicero, of Cæsar, and of Cato, he vindicated the dignity of the Roman senate, which Crebillon had degraded, by rendering all those great characters subordinate to that of Catiline. I remember, when he had just written the fine scenes which describe the interviews of Cicero and Cæsar with Catiline, he

read them to me in a style of perfection, to which no actor will ever approach; with a noble simplicity, free from all peculiarity of manner; better, in short, than I had ever heard from himself. 'Indeed,' said I, 'your conscience is at rest upon these lines; you lay no false ornament upon them, and you are right; never did you compose finer. This play acquired, in a high degree, the esteem of all good judges; but it was not written for the multitude. The beauty of the poetry, and the learning displayed in the adherence to the manners and character of the time, were merits little felt by the great mass of the public. Thus Voltaire, notwithstanding a prodigious advantage over his rival, had the affliction of seeing his triumph disputed, and even refused.

The disgust occasioned by these occurrences made him determine upon going to Prussia. One only difficulty remained, which was removed by an incident so curious, that it may amuse you for a moment.

The difficulty lay in the travelling expences, about which Frederic required a little solicitation. He was perfectly willing to pay Voltaire's expences, and agreed to give him a thousand louis for that purpose. But Madame Denis wishing to accompany her uncle, Voltaire asked a thousand more for her. To this the king of Prussia would on no account listen. 'I shall be very glad,' said he, 'that Madame Denis accompany you; but I do not ask it.'—'See, now,' said Voltaire to me, 'this niggardly behaviour in a king. He has tons of gold, yet will he not give a thousand poor louis to have the pleasure of seeing Madame Denis at Berlin. He shall give them; otherwise I myself will not go.' This dispute was terminated by a ludicrous incident. One morning, as I went to call upon him, I met his friend Thiriot in the garden of the Palace Royal, and as he was in chase of literary news, I asked him if there were any? 'Yes indeed there are, and very curious too,' said he. 'You are on

your way to M. de Voltaire's, there you shall hear them; for I mean to go there also, as soon as I have taken coffee.'

I found Voltaire writing in bed. He asked me, 'What news?'—'I know none,' said I; 'but Thiriot, whom I met at the Palais Royal, says he has something very interesting to tell you. He will be here presently.'

'Well, Thiriot,' said he, 'you have curious news then to tell us.'—'Oh! very curious, and with which you will be vastly delighted,' replied Thiriot, with his sardonic laugh, and the nasal twang of a capuchin. 'Well, let us hear what you have to say.'—'I have to say, that Arnaud Baculard is arrived at Potsdam, and that the king of Prussia has received him with open arms.'—'With open arms!'—'That Arnaud has presented him with a poem.'—'Stupid, bombastical stuff?'—'Not at all, vastly pretty; so much so, that the king of Prussia has written another in answer.'—'The king of Prussia,

a poem to D'Arnaud! Come, come, Thiriot; they have been making jest of you.'—' That may be; only I have the two poems in my pocket.'—' Quick, let's see; let me read these two masterpieces. How insipid! how flat! how mean!' said he, reading Arnaud's poem. Then taking up the king's, he read for a moment in silence, with a look of pity. But when he came to these lines,

> Voltaire's begins to set,
> But you are in your dawn,

he sprung up, and leapt out of bed, bounding with rage. ' Voltaire beginning to set, and Baculard in his dawn! and a king can write such enormous folly! Ah! let him never think of any thing but reigning.'

We had the greatest difficulty, Thiriot and I, to keep from bursting into laughter, when we saw Voltaire dancing about in his shirt, and furiously apostrophizing the king of Prussia. ' I will go,' said he; ' yes, I will go, and teach him to know men:' and that instant his journey was

fixed. My suspicion is, that the king of Prussia intentionally applied this spur to him, otherwise I doubt much if he would have gone; so irritated was he at the refusal of the thousand louis, not at all out of avarice, but from mortification at not having attained his object.

Eager, in the utmost degree, to have his own will in every thing, he felt an incredible repugnance, even on the most trifling occasions, to yield any point which he had once resolved upon. I saw another singular instance of this before his departure. He had taken a fancy to provide himself with a cutlass; and one morning that I was with him, a bundle was brought, out of which he was to choose. He chose accordingly. But the merchant demanded a louis for his cutlass, and Voltaire had taken it into his head to give only eighteen livres. Hereupon he begins calculating every particular of its value; he adds, that the merchant's countenance bears the stamp of honesty; and

with that truth which is painted on his forehead, he will surely confess that eighteen livres is a very good price for his instrument. The merchant accepts the praise which he is pleased to bestow on his physiognomy; but answers that, as an honest man, he could not but keep to his first word; that he had asked only the precise value of the article, and that to sell it lower, would be doing an injury to his children. 'You have children, then?' said Voltaire.—'Yes, Sir, I have five; three sons and two daughters; the youngest of whom is twelve years old.'—'Very well; we shall contrive to get places for your sons, and portions for your daughters. I have friends in the finance; I have interest in the public offices;—but let us put an end to this little business; here are your eighteen livres; let no more be said on the subject.' The honest merchant made the most humble acknowledgments for the patronage with which Voltaire was pleased to honour

him; but he kept to his first price as to the cutlass, and would not abate a farthing. I shall not dwell upon this scene; though Voltaire continued for a quarter of an hour, vainly employing every form of seductive eloquence; not to save six livres, which he would have given to a beggar; but to obtain his will by the power of persuasion. He himself was obliged to yield; and with an angry and mortified air, he threw upon the table the crown which he was so unwilling to bring forth. The merchant, as soon as he got his money, thanked him for his kindness, and went away.

'Well,' said I, in a low voice, as he departed, 'I am very glad of it.'—'What are you very glad of?' asked Voltaire, angrily.—'That the family of this poor man is no longer to be pitied. His sons, it seems, are all to get places, and his daughters marriage portions; while he himself has, in the meantime, sold his cutlass at his own price, which you have paid in spite of all your elo-

quence.'—'And this is what you are glad of, you obstinate Limosin?'—'Oh, yes, I am quite delighted; had he yielded, I could willingly have beat him.'—'Well,' said he, laughing to himself, after a moment's silence, 'do you know that if Moliere had witnessed such a scene, he would have turned it to some account.'—'Indeed,' said I, 'it would have been a counterpart to that of M. Dimanche.' Thus it was that any anger, or rather impatience, which he might feel towards me, ended always in mildness and friendship.

I was in Voltaire's secret, as to the light in which he viewed the king of Prussia, and thought myself also in the secret of that monarch, with regard to the little sincerity of the caresses he lavished on Voltaire. I had some presentiment, therefore, of the misunderstanding which would take place when they came into contact with each other. A soul so imperious, and a mind so ardent, could hardly be compatible. I was in great

hopes therefore of soon seeing Voltaire return, more out of humour with Germany than he was with his own country. But the new cause of disgust which he met with at taking leave of the king, and the rage he expressed, left me no longer this consoling hope. In his character of gentleman in ordinary to the king's bed-chamber, he thought he might venture to ask if he had any commands for the king of Prussia; but the king, instead of replying, abruptly turned his back on him. And such was his fury, that as soon as he was out of the kingdom, he returned his patent as historiographer of France, and accepted, without his consent, the cross of the order of merit, with which the king of Prussia presented him, though only to strip him of it shortly after.

The view of so much bitterness and tribulation mingled in the life of this great man, only gave me a more formidable impression of the literary career in which I had entered, and a more pleasing one

of the obscure repose which I was to enjoy at Versailles.

Here, thank heaven, close the errors of my youth; I now begin to enter upon a less dissipated, a more correct, and more uniform mode of life, less exposed to the tempest of passion; my character, too long various and changeable, now acquired some degree of consistence; and reason, placed on a solid foundation, could silently employ itself in regulating my conduct.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

NOTES

TO THE FIRST VOLUME.

NOTE 1, p. 15.

The course of study in the French colleges, is divided into three parts, *Humanity*, *Rhetoric*, *Philosophy*.

The *Humanity* classes continue for about six years, and are spent in learning Latin, with a slight tincture of Greek at the end.

The *Rhetoric* classes continue for two years. Here the students, for the first time, begin to compose; for, till then, they have only translated. A thought is given them, which they are to extend and enlarge, to express in rounded and lengthened periods. This exercise is called an *Amplification*. At length they come to formal discourses, almost all in the Latin language.

The next class is that of *Philosophy*, which begins with a compendium, or a multitude of questions about the existence of philosophy,

the philosophy of Adam, &c. From thence they go on to *Logic;* that which is taught, at least in a great number of colleges, is said to be nearly as follows: to conceive well by means of universals, to judge well by means of catagories, and to construct a syllogism by means of the figures, *Barbara, celarem, darii.* It is asked, if logic be an art or a science? if the conclusion belong to the essence of the syllogism? &c. Metaphysics is conducted nearly in the same manner.

NOTE 2, p. 195.

THE following particulars respecting this amiable man, are given by Marmontel in the preface to one of his tragedies.

'He was a native of Provence, and of a family distinguished by its nobility. He embraced at first the profession of arms, and served for some years as a captain in the king's regiment. The officers of this corps, who were fortunately capable of estimating his singular merit, had conceived such a tender veneration for him, that I have heard some of them call him by the respectable name of father.

'The fatigues of the war in Bohemia had deranged the health of M. de Vauvenargue to such a degree, as to render him incapable of serving. Zeal for his country's welfare then directed his views towards diplomacy. The habit of constant study and deep reflection, joined to the prodigious extent of his capacity, soon qualified him to offer his services to the ministry. They were accepted, and, in the interval previous to his being employed, he withdrew into the bosom of his family, where he could devote himself, at more leisure, to the new kind of study upon which he had entered. There it was, that the small-pox reduced him to a state of complete infirmity. Disfigured by the marks which it had left, seized with that breast complaint which brought him to the tomb, and almost deprived of sight, he found himself under the necessity of declining, with thanks, the good intentions of the ministry. But, in the midst of bodily suffering, he could not renounce the desire of being useful to mankind. His last years were employed in the study of philosophy, that is to say, of the soul. His book, entitled, *Introduction to the knowledge of the human mind*, was the fruit of this study; a precious monument, which may be called the triumph of reason, of ge-

nius, and of virtue. Here we see that no man deserved better than himself, that panegyric, which he pronounces on M. de Fenelon.

"What sincerity, what goodness of heart, do we discover in thy writings! What splendour of imagery and language! Who ever embellished with so many flowers, a style so natural, so melodious, and so tender? By whom was reason ever adorned with so attractive a dress? Ah! what ample treasures were to be found in thy rich simplicity."

'A small number of friends formed the only consolation of his sufferings. He knew the world, and did not despise it. The friend of mankind, he considered vice as a misfortune; pity, in his heart, supplied the place of indignation and hatred. Never did art or intrigue possess such empire over men's minds as he derived from the goodness of his character, the mildness of his eloquence. He was always in the right, and yet no one felt himself humbled by it. The affability of the friend made us love in him the superiority of the master.

'Mild, feeling, and compassionate, he had full command over our hearts. An unalterable serenity withdrew his sorrows from the eyes of friendship. His example was suffi-

cient to teach us how to support adversity; and the man who witnessed his equanimity, dared not be unhappy in his presence. The nearer he saw himself to his end, the more anxious he felt to employ usefully the hours that were flying away. The last moments of his life were employed in putting the finishing hand to his book, and he died with that constancy, and those sentiments, which became a christian philosopher, in the bosom of peace, and in the arms of his friends.'

NOTE 3, p. 222.

As the plays of our author are not generally read in this country, a short analysis of their contents may be necessary, in order that the narrative may be properly understood. The following is an outline of the plot of Dionysius.

Dionysius the elder is represented (still more than in the history) as a severe and inhuman tyrant. Dion, though decidedly hostile to his system of conduct, continues still to serve him, in hopes of his amendment. Dionysius the younger, is represented as in the highest degree amiable and accomplished; in short, as the model of a perfect prince:

and, that a tender passion may not be wanting, he is distractedly in love with the fair Aretia, the daughter of Dion, who returns his affection. Their prospects of happiness, however, are unexpectedly disappointed by the tyrant's determining to marry her himself. Aretia, on first hearing of this proposal, is struck with horror; but soon determines to sacrifice her passion to the welfare of her country. She, therefore, offers to become the wife of Dionysius, on condition of his changing his conduct, and consulting only the good of his people. Dionysius, beyond expectation, offers to resign his crown, provided she can procure the consent of his son to assume the reins of government. Aretia has then an interview with her lover, and by the influence of the same motives which had weighed with herself, at length prevails upon him to accept the crown, and renounce her. Immediately on learning this resolution, Dionysius, who had made the proposal only with a treacherous intention, orders his son to be thrown into chains.

Among the motives which Aretia had employed to induce her lover to accept the offer of the crown, she had intimated, that a conspiracy was on foot against his father, which would be fatal to him if he continued to

reign. He now thinks it his duty to inform his father of the danger to which he is exposed; but, in order to make a compromise with love and friendship, he refuses to name the authors. The tyrant, not satisfied, threatens him with torture and death, unless he will make the full discovery; and, finding these threats vain, he sends Aretia to him with the view of extorting the secret. While they are conversing together, a friend of Dion enters and informs them, that the plot is brought to maturity, and on the point of being executed. Dionysius not only indignantly rejects the proposal of conspiring against his father, but orders Aretia to remain as a hostage, and as a security for Dion's fidelity. This is that part of the fourth act, which caused such alarm to our author's critics, but which met with such brilliant success. Meanwhile, the tyrant discovers the secret of the conspiracy, upon which he calls upon Aretia to marry him immediately, as the only condition on which her friends can expect pardon. Aretia consents, but procures poison mingled in the cup which they were to drink at the ceremony, and thus puts an end both to his life and her own. The tyrant then rushes upon the stage, eager that, before dying, he may avenge himself of his son, whom he

considers as the guilty person. He then cries out—

—'Vous, qu'en ces lieux mon fils soit amené.
O vengeance! ô fureur! je suis empoisonné.
Je reconnois mon fils. Sa main desesperée
M'a fait boire la mort dans la coupe sacrée.
Sous quel voile imposteur marchoit sa cruauté
Monstre, digne de moi, tu m'as trop imité.
Toi qu'il a fait couler dans mes veines brulantes,
Poison, rends, s'il se peut, tes atteintes plus lentes.
Mon supplice m'est doux, s'il peut se prolonger.
O mort! affreuse mort! laisse-moi me venger.'

but he dies before he is able to gratify his vengeance.

The stile of this play is remarkably different from that mild and tender character which breathes in his tales. The powers which it displays, though not of the first order, are considerable; but appear only in passages expressive of force and energy, with a mixture of horror.

NOTE 1, p. 286.

The plot of the tragedy of Aristomenes is as follows.—

Aristomenes, the defender of the liberty of Messene, and the darling of the army and people, is regarded with a jealous eye by a

numerous party in the senate, and plots are even formed to destroy him. His wife, Leonide, on being informed of the dangers to which he is exposed, is sensible that the only means of safety will be a war with Lacedemon, which may render his services necessary. She forms, therefore, the extraordinary resolution of going to Sparta, and giving such information as she imagines will induce the city to commence hostilities against Messene. She, at the same time, offers herself and her son as hostages for the truth of this report. The Spartans generously send them both back; but, on their arrival, Aristomenes, ignorant of his wife's real motives, is the first to order them to be thrown into prison. Leonide, however, procures an interview with her husband, and defends herself in the following speech, which forms rather a favourable specimen of the author's poetry:—

' A l'interet public par les loix asservee,
Je lui sacrifirois, et ma gloire, et ma vie
Mais pour toi je suis prête a te sacrifier
Ma gloire, mon pays, mon sang, le monde entier.
Que m'importe Messene, et le monde, et moi même,
Quand mon cour eperdu tremble pour ce qu'il
aime?

Je ne connois que toi, je ne vis que pour toi.
Le cœur de mon epoux est l'univers pour moi.
Sans doute un tel aveu te revolte, t'étoune :
Tout cede dans ton cœur quand la patrie ordonne ;
Le mien d'aucun remords ne se sent combattu.
Je t'adore, voila ma premiere vertu,
Ma gloire, mon devoir, ma loi la plus austere,
Le plus beau, le plus saint, des nœuds que je revere.
Oui j'aime mieux mourir coupable aux yeux de tous
Pour avoir immolé Messene a mon epoux ;
Que de vivre adorée en heroine, en reine,
Pour avoir immolé mon epoux a Messene.'

Aristomenes declares himself unable to blame this excess of love, but is under the necessity of leaving his wife and daughter in the hands of justice. Their trial accordingly comes on, and notwithstanding the speech of Leonide (which, by the by, is not quite so eloquent as, from what is here said, we should be led to suppose), they are both condemned to die. Upon the arrival of this afflicting intelligence, Aristomenes is urged by his friends to avail himself of his influence over the army, and to punish those persons who could deliver so criminal a sentence. But he steadily resists this proposal, urging, that if the soldiery were once let loose, they would

not be satisfied without the entire destruction of Messene. Then, says he—

' Lieux où je vis le jour, palais de nos aïeux
Temple de la justice, asyle de nos dieux,
Remparts, d'ou j'ecartai l'esclavage et la guerre,
Vous aurez, pour moi seul, disparu de la terre.'

As a mitigation of the sentence, the senate then decree, that it shall be executed on one only, leaving to Aristomenes the choice of which that should be. They are then introduced, each earnestly petitioning him to fix upon themselves. Aristomenes exclaims loudly against this inhuman alternative; but while he is yet unable to determine, one of his friends comes and relates, that he had stabbed, in full senate, the two ringleaders of the opposite party; that a complete change had then been produced in the minds both of senate and people; that the sentence had been reversed; and that all parties were now loud in praise of Aristomenes.

Marmontel's two other plays are—

1. *The Heraclides.* The plot of this tragedy is as follows:—Deianira and Olimpia, the wife and daughter of Hercules, arrive at Athens, to save themselves from the persecution of Euristh[illegible] king of Argos, the mortal

enemy of the offspring of that hero. Euristheus invades Attica with a large army, and sends Copreus to demand that the fugitives should be delivered up to him. Demophoon, king of Athens, rejects the demand, urged particularly by his son Sthenelus, who is in love with Olimpia. Meantime, an oracle pronounces, that, in order to ensure victory, a female of illustrious descent must be sacrificed to Ceres; and as the king cannot dispose of the life of his subjects, it seems necessary that one of the posterity of Hercules should perish. A contest then arises between the mother and daughter, which should be the victim. The urgency of each to sacrifice herself for the other, gives rise to the chief interest of the play. At length Sthenelus discovers, that the soothsayer who had delivered the oracle was an impostor, who acted in concert with Euristheus; defeats the enemy and marries Olimpia.

2. *Cleopatra.* In this tragedy, Cleopatra is drawn in colours very different from those in which we are accustomed to view her; as virtuous as she was beautiful, and unfortunate only in being loved with too much fondness. The author even asserts, that he has historical proofs of this being her real character, which he published a few days previous to the

presentation; but found it impossible, in so short a time, to destroy the impression of two thousand years. The catastrophe turns upon a letter, containing overtures of love, which she writes to Cesar, but only with the view of ensnaring him. Cesar, however, shews the letter to Antony, who, in despair at her infidelity, kills himself; on learning which, Cleopatra follows his example.

NOTE 5, p. 309.

MARIVAUX. This writer, like Marmontel, though chiefly known among us as a writer of novels, was in France first raised to notice by his dramatic performances. At the age of eighteen, being in a company where the talent of writing comedy was extolled in what he thought an extravagant manner, he ventured to say, that it did not appear to him so difficult a matter. The company laughed, and bid him try it. Accordingly, in a day or two he brought a long comedy, written in prose, which succeeded. But though this seemed to have given him a decided bent towards the drama, he did not publish it, but continued long to improve his powers in silence. Nor did he appear, as a dramatic writer, till the age of thirty. His first appearance in that cha-

racter was in a tragedy called the 'Death of Annibal.' But, though he drew well the character of that hero, the piece is said to have wanted colouring and animation. He found that his powers did not lie that way; and, from that time, devoted himself to comedy. He wrote a number of pieces of this description, yet all so like each other, that his critics alleged, he never wrote more than one. They were all founded on what was called a *surprise of love*; that is, on two persons who are in love without knowing it, and never make the discovery till the end of the play. But the refined and studied wit which he was ambitious of displaying, did not at all accord with the simplicity which was to be expected from a plot of this kind. His romances, which are well known in this country, possess more nature and variety.

His conversation was similar to his writings. At first, it amused by its singularity; but soon became fatiguing by its metaphysical monotony, and too studied expressions. It was agreeable to be sometimes in company, but to be often so was tiresome. He was too polite not to appear attentive in company, but he attended less to what was said than to what he thought might be said on any subject. For this reason, all con-

parties were nearly alike to him; nay, he is even said to have preferred that of fools, as leaving most scope for the exercise of this kind of ingenuity; perhaps, also, from the homage which they were disposed to pay him in return for the unusual attention with which they found themselves honoured.

Though there was so much study in his own manner, there was nothing he detested so much in others. He had received from a friend a number of letters very much in his own style, which had pleased him greatly; but one day that he called upon him, happening to see on his table scrolls of these letters, he ran off, declaring that he would have nothing more to do with him; and kept his word. He was once in love with a young lady, and was on the point of paying his addresses to her; but, happening to enter unexpectedly, he found her studying attitudes before a mirror, which instantly extinguished his passion.

He was rather too much disposed to take offence at speeches made in his company; of which Marmontel gives afterwards a striking instance. A friend of his, who was surprised at the coldness with which he had repeatedly behaved to him, at length became urgent to know the reason. 'A year ago,'

replied Marivaux, 'you whispered in my presence, into somebody's ear; now, if it had been any thing good you were saying, you would not have whispered it.' His character, however, was highly honourable and beneficent: this last virtue he carried to an excess that was hurtful to himself. An anecdote is told of a beggar, who, having applied to him for alms, was chid by Marivaux on the ground of being able to work. 'Oh, sir,' says the claimant, 'if you only knew how lazy I am!' Marivaux was so much amused with this singular apology, that he immediately granted his petition. He died on the 11th of February 1763, at the age of seventy-five.

Mairan. A man highly distinguished for his proficiency in natural philosophy. He was born of a noble family, at Beziers, in 1678. He succeeded Fontenelle as perpetual secretary to the French academy, and was thought almost to have filled his place. He possessed much of the same talent of placing abstract subjects in a luminous point of view. He held this office, however, only till 1744. All his works are on subjects of natural philosophy, except the eulogies on members of the academy, which he pro-

nounced while exercising the functions of its secretary. His manners are said to have been extremely mild and engaging. He died in 1771, at the age of ninety-three.

Astruc. A physician of the first eminence. He received his degree from the university of Montpellier, and practised for some time in that city: but the reputation of his skill induced Louis XV to call him to Paris, and place him in the number of his consulting physicians. He was also appointed a professor in the royal college. He was some time first physician to Augustus III king of Poland; but finding that the ceremonial of that court imposed too great restraint upon him, he returned to Paris; and died there in 1766, at the age of eighty-three.

NOTE 6, p. 314.

Vaucanson. A mechanic of the greatest celebrity. He was born at Grenoble, in 1709. Happening, while yet a child, to be shut up in a room where there was a clock, he examined it, and soon found out its mechanism. From that time he began to employ himself in the construction of machines. In 1738

he came to Paris with an automaton of his own framing, which could play ten airs on the flute. In consequence of this invention, his reputation soon spread; besides the favour of the public, he received marked testimonies of approbation from the Academy of Sciences, and was admitted a member of that learned body. Besides a variety of other ingenious automatons, he contrived new machinery in the silk manufacture, with the inspection of which he was intrusted by Fleuri. Marmontel's account of his simplicity, with regard to every thing which did not concern his art, is generally confirmed. 'Vaucanson,' says M. d'Israeli, 'was as much a machine as any he made.' He died on the 21st of November 1782.

NOTE 7, p. 310.

Bernis, the Abbé de. A well known character, who, by his amatory poems, and by his address in paying court to the fair, raised himself first to the rank of ambassador, and afterwards to that of minister for foreign affairs in France. Marmontel gives a history of his elevation in the second volume of his memoirs.

Duclos. A man of considerable literary merit, and who long held the office of secretary to the French academy. He was born at Dinant in Britanny, in the year 1705. His father was a hat-maker. He was educated at Paris, and soon distinguished himself by his proficiency in literature. His best work was on the 'Manners of the Age;' somewhat in the style of La Bruyere; but he was not thought to have the same depth and energy. He wrote also some novels, which display knowledge of the world. Being appointed historiographer of France, he wrote 'Secret Memoirs of the Reigns of Louis XIV and Louis XV.' He passed slightly over many of the facts, as being generally known at the time; but the narrative is rendered valuable by judicious reflections, and by his skill in [illegible] characters. His own [illegible] be set, and somewhat blunt. [illegible] say of such a man is a fo[illegible] assertion, and he proves it [illegible] attached originally to what [illegible] philosophical party, he [illegible] with the excesses of [illegible] used to say: 'They [illegible] have made me a d[illegible] have succeeded in [illegible] sideration in the

states of Britanny having, in reward of services which they had rendered, been desired to name persons whom they judged worthy of royal favour, Ducles was unanimously named; and he was, in consequence, ennobled. He died on the 26th of March 1772. Marmontel succeeded to both his offices, to that of historiographer immediately; and to the other after a short interval.

NOTE 8, p. 357.

Tencin, Madame de. A French lady of great celebrity. She entered, early in life, into a convent, but soon tiring of that mode of life, found means to escape from it, and came to Paris. She there contrived to insinuate herself into the first political circles, acquired considerable influence, particularly with Cardinal Dubois, with whom she was closely connected. She next became the mistress of Law, and deprived her brother of his benefice. Her object was now to obtain a cardinal's hat for Benoit, and she procured the abbey of Fontenelle; but on a point of honour, it is said, however, she was not quite so scrupulous as to the means.

She kept at her house a rendezvous of literary men, of whom Marmontel has given some account. They were thought to proceed on too exclusive a system, and to have adopted the maxim—'No one shall have wit, except we and our friends.' However, they certainly included the first names in French literature. Madame de Tencin died in 1749, at an advanced age. She was the author of several popular romances; the Siege of Calais, the Count de Comminge, &c.

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